



CHAPMAN BRANCH LIBRARY  
217 SO. 24 WEST ST.

DISCARDED  
SALT LAKE  
PUBLIC LIBRARY  
CHAPMAN BRANCH




DISCARDED<sup>8</sup>  
SALT LAKE  
PUBLIC LIBRARY  
CHAPMAN BRANCH









Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2022 with funding from  
Kahle/Austin Foundation

# ISLAND FARM









THE TWO LEFT THE HIGHROAD AND PLUNGED INTO THE INSTANT  
SECLUSION OF THE FOREST.



# ISLAND FARM

BY

HILDEGARDE HAWTHORNE

AUTHOR OF

"MAKESHIFT FARM," ETC.

198324



D. APPLETON AND COMPANY  
NEW YORK :: 1926 :: LONDON

COPYRIGHT, 1926, BY  
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

# CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. OVER NEW COUNTRY TO A NEW LAND . . .	1
II. WHO, AND . . . , AND WHEREFROM . . .	18
III. LAPPED IN LUXURY . . . . .	26
IV. THE SHARK, THE SAILOR, AND THE MONKEY . . . . .	44
V. THE END OF THE RAINBOW . . . . .	57
VI. EUREKA! . . . . .	69
VII. BUSY DAYS . . . . .	83
VIII. THE LONELY LITTLE GIRL . . . . .	99
IX. DIFFERENT ADVENTURES . . . . .	114
X. RAIN . . . . .	134
XI. THE VISITOR FROM YUCATAN . . . . .	148
XII. WHY NOT WIN THIS PRIZE? . . . . .	157
XIII. MR. BRANDON-SMITH DISAPPEARS . . . . .	168
XIV. ALARUMS AND EXCURSIONS . . . . .	185
XV. LORD BYRON SCENTS A MYSTERY . . . . .	199
XVI. THE MYSTERY CLEARED UP . . . . .	214
XVII. EXCITING EVENTS . . . . .	231
XVIII. THE WORLD OPENS ITS DOORS . . . . .	244





# ISLAND FARM

## CHAPTER I

### OVER NEW SEAS TO A NEW LAND

**Z**ACK and Enley gravely regarded a sailor painting steadily on a portion of the ship's anatomy, the while he sang a song in Spanish with haunting minor cadences. The steamer, a small vessel, had a sail set to steady her against the long, slow roll of the intensely blue water, and she swung calmly forward, headed due south. The sun was a golden glory, and every so often a flock of flying fish fluttered into the shining air, to disappear next moment into the shining water. High over the ship was a large bird, which the boys now knew was a frigate bird. They had hoped it was an albatross.

"I suppose," hazarded Zack, "that this Spanish sailor would prefer to be a pirate. Probably his father was one. I wish he could speak American."

The sailor winked at Enley, spat over the rail, and resumed his work and his song.

## ISLAND FARM

"Suppose our father was a pirate," Enley contributed dreamily. "The pirate stories never say anything about the pirate's children, but I bet they had a great time. Of course some of them turned into ordinary sailors, like this one, but others . . ." he paused, allowing his mind to range over the delightful possibilities.

Wendo and Treachy came hurtling out of the companionway toward their brothers, shouting as they came in confusing competition. But the boys got the message:

"We'll be in harbor to-night, and early to-morrow morning we'll land! The Captain just told Papa and Papa told Mumsie."

The two whooped at the news. But Enley declared regretfully that he'd be sorry, all the same, to leave the old ship:

"Mr. Jackson told me that Zack an' I'd got our sea-legs, and that he thought in a little while more we'd make first class sailors. He said he was just as old as Zack when he shipped for a trip round the world, and it took three years and made a man of him."

Mr. Jackson was the first mate, a marvelous man with tattooing on both arms clear to the shoulders and across his chest. He had a short, thick black beard and laughing blue eyes. "My

## OVER NEW SEAS TO A NEW LAND

mother came from Ireland," he used to say full of "and there wasn't a prettier colleen in all L. she And I'm her spittin' image, not counting the beard."

"Of course," Deedah said to the rest, when they talked this over, "she couldn't have been really pretty, but she was probably very spirited."

"Would you like to ship for a journey round the world?" Treachy demanded of Enley.

"Sure! But anyhow, this is a starter. Think of it, in the tropics to-morrow, eating breadfruits and bananas right off the trees and everything! Crikey!"

The sailor, finishing his stint, gathered up paint pot and brushes. He grinned at them all.

"Mebbe *am* pirate," he remarked, and lounged off, rolling slightly in his walk, as a jolly tar should, his flashing black eyes still turned on the group of startled youngsters.

"Gosh, he does speak American, and he never let on!" exclaimed Zack.

"What did he mean, that he's a pirate?" asked Wendo, fearfully.

"Well, most Spaniards are pirates of some kind," explained Enley, "and we were just wondering why he wasn't one, and said maybe his father was . . . gee, s'pose he is!"

## ISLAND FARM

“Supacks, he’s just putting it on,” asserted tribuk. “Thinks he’ll scare us.”

an They sniffed at this, Wendo being particularly contemptuous. “Anyhow, I’d sort of like to see a real pirate,” she declared.

The morning wore sweetly on, fragrant with the sea, blue as a huge morning glory, a slight breeze tempering the heat of the sun. Presently Papa brought the Princess up and made her comfortable in a deck chair under the awning. She looked pale, for she’d been ill almost ever since they went aboard. The trip had been rough, the small vessel tumbling in the huge ocean swell like a grain of corn in a hot popper. Several of the children had had a touch of sea-sickness. Deedah had been immune, as had the Baby. Zack reported proudly that he’d eaten every meal, even though he’d lost a few of them promptly, Treachy was in a like case, but Enley and Wendo had been less fortunate. They had lain forlorn on deck chairs for the first three days, refusing all sustenance, careless of life, turning pale faces away from the reports of the rest that the eats were dandy, sucking feebly at a lemon. Suddenly they had recovered, however, and from then on made up for lost time.

Deedah sat down beside her mother, who smiled at her. The Baby lay flat on her stomach on the



## OVER NEW SEAS TO A NEW LAND

deck near by, looking at a picture book full of ogres and fairies and gnomes. Now and then she emitted a pleased squeak, or pretended to read aloud, murmuring such portions of the stories as she remembered, with variations to suit herself.

“Are’t you a little sorry that we’re going to leave this boat to-morrow, Mumsie?” Deedah wanted to know. “Last days are always sad, don’t you think? And now it’s so beautiful and smooth, and the Captain’s so nice, and so is Mr. Jackson; he’s perfectly wonderful, Mumsie! He said he’d like to show us the full-rigged ship he’s got tattooed on his back, but that it wouldn’t do—not for a first mate.”

“Why not?” asked the Princess.

“We asked him, an’ he said the etiquette on shipboard is ever so strict. But aren’t you really sorry we’re to land to-morrow?”

“Certainly not, you absurd child. I can’t get off this ship too soon to please me. . . .”

A particularly effective squeal from the Baby interrupted Mumsie at this point, and then she chanted happily:

“And the *ogra* opened his mouth and a great yowl came out, and the *ogra* grabbed all the people and ate them very fast so that nobody was left

## ISLAND FARM

at all, and the *ogra* gave another great yowl. . . .”

“That’s not in the story at all, Baby,” said Deedah. “Mumsie,” she added next moment, “there’s a pirate on this ship.”

“A *what?*”

“Well, there’s a Spanish sailor who probably had a pirate for his father, the boys said, and he said he was mebbe a pirate himself, and he looks just like one, Mumsie, an’ he’s even got a knife in his belt.”

Mr. Jackson, smart and immaculate in his white uniform, stopped to ask the Princess how she felt. He nodded at Deedah, made a slight salute, passed on up the deck.

Deedah sighed.

“Isn’t he simply splendid! It’s going to be awful to say good-by to Mr. Jackson.”

The day passed, with one meal succeeding another, with shuffleboard and hopscotch, the excitement of another steamer, and toward sunset the eager children made out the dim outline of the mountainous island toward which they were bound. Faint, purple, the piled masts sketched against the evening splendor was like a vision in a dream, unreal and lovely.

They were allowed to sit up till the ship came to

## OVER NEW SEAS TO A NEW LAND

der strange flowers, stood bungalows, mostly white with green shutters and broad verandas. Close up was the small, dusty town, palms jutting up irregularly from between its ranged houses, low and white with bright awnings flaunting here and there. The quay alongside which the ship lay was heaped with bales and boxes, while up and down the long gangway went an endless procession of black men and women in white and bright-hued calico garments, those coming up empty-handed and chattering volubly, those going down straining under heavy burdens, carried on their heads. The women's skirts were kilted to the knee, and all were barefooted. A glorious lot of noise was going up on all sides, but the talk sounded unfamiliar and foreign.

“What kind of language is it?” asked Treachy wonderingly.

“It's their idea of English,” replied the obliging passenger. “After you've lived here a while you'll understand some of it.”

A negro on the pier below them, dressed in a torn white shirt and gray cotton trousers, one leg of the garment hanging down as far as the bare foot, the other rolled to the knee, shouted up to them, insistent, in a high voice:

“What's he saying?” asked Enley.

## ISLAND FARM

"Wants the kind, handsome young gentleman to give him a *quattie*," explained the passenger.

"What's a *quattie*?"

"A copper farthing—about half a cent."

"Ought we to give him one?"

"Certainly not! Lazy beggar."

Then the Princess came for them, with the Baby trotting beside her and soon they were in the whirl of landing, passing the doctor's inspection, watching the signing of papers, helping with the bags, running to get poor Woof, who had been confined to a cage most of the journey, and was so excited at getting out that he barked frightfully and nearly dragged Zack off the gangplank. Down on the pier at last, their feet on the new land.

Suddenly Deedah gave an inarticulate cry and began to battle her way back against the stream of descending passengers. Papa, seeing her, rushed in pursuit.

"What in the world's the matter? Are you frightened of the place, and heading back home already?"

"Oh, no! But I forgot to say good-by to Mr. Jackson."

"Can't do that now . . . he's too busy. Come along, child."

## OVER NEW SEAS TO A NEW LAND

Deedah, with a yearning backward glance, followed Papa and joined the rest of the family, already making for the exit and the funny little open carriages drawn by very small horses that were to take them to a hotel for breakfast. Through the narrow streets bordered by arcades, and already crowded with white and colored persons who sauntered slowly and talked in low voices that made a steady rushing murmur, the carriages rattled swiftly. In a few minutes they drew up before a spreading two-story building all of whose windows were big double glass doors opening on lower and upper verandas. Half the building was covered with a magnificent magenta-colored vine, and its verandas were sheltered by hanging green Venetian blinds, some rolled up. The children, herding close to the Princess, followed her into a wide cool hall, and through that to a large square room with many tables and chairs, with windows on three sides, all protected from the sun by the blinds, so that the light was greeny-shimmering and full of little shadows and sunstreaks that moved about over the white tables and silver and china in a most delightful way. Here they were served with their first island breakfast.

Somewhat to the children's disappointment it



## ISLAND FARM

wasn't so unlike other breakfasts. To be sure, it began with a pulpy queer-tasting fruit called a *pawpaw*, but after that, instead of green turtle steak and breadfruit there was oatmeal porridge and eggs and bacon, and the milk was just milk, the toast mere toast, rather chill and soggy. In no time at all the stuff was eaten and the small procession again made ready to go.

They were getting into the carriages when it was discovered that Enley and Wendo were missing.

"Where in the world could they have got to?" the Princess was despairing. "Here we have that long drive before us, and I want to get settled before night. They were right here not five minutes ago."

"They can go a long way in five minutes," remarked Papa. "We'll go on without them. They can't very well get off the island and some day when we've got more time we'll find them. Get in," and he tried to put the Princess into the first of the two carriages.

But the Princess wouldn't agree to that, to the relief of the remaining children. Zack offered to go in search of the wanderers. So, eagerly, did Deedah and Treachy. But they were told to stay

## OVER NEW SEAS TO A NEW LAND

where they were and not get out of sight. Up, just then, came a tall, thin negro, grinning:

“Yo’ look for lil’ buckra massa and missie? Him down in market, ya.”

“Market? Where’s that?” demanded Papa.

“I show you . . . foller along, Massa.”

“I’ll probably murder them when I find them,” Papa remarked grimly. “Lead away,” he directed the black.

The Princess and the Baby got into their carriage to wait, while the older children followed their father, who followed the negro, down the hot white street, so unlike any other street they had ever known. It took an abrupt turn under a wide arch, and plunged headlong into an open square packed with a milling crowd of blacks in bright cotton garments, loaded with baskets heaped with unfamiliar fruits and vegetables, sitting beside heaps of these same things spread on bits of canvas on the ground, or urging tiny donkeys heavily loaded with more of them as best they could through the crowd. Rows of men sat along the coping of a low wall, exchanging laughing banter with those below, and from all about rose the endless chatter of the warm, soft, slurring voices, punctuated by sharp sounds, the grating of an unoiled wheel, the clank of a piece of iron

## ISLAND FARM

falling on stone, the heehaw of a donkey, the scream of a child. Motion, sound and color under the patched sun and shade of shelters of ragged palm leaves propped on shaky poles.

Their guide, pausing, cast his eyes about, and pointed.

“You fin’ him over yander, Buckra,” he said.

They looked in the indicated direction and saw what appeared to be a whirling vortex of excited negroes revolving about some invisible point of interest. Papa pushed hurriedly toward this commotion, Zack, Deedah, and Treachy tagging him close, the negro pressing on behind. Once through the circle they saw Wendo and Enley, back to back, standing at bay. Enley’s thick blond hair stood straight up on his head, his cap in one hand and a large yellow fruit in the other. Wendo, in her striped white and pink dress under her broad-brimmed white hat, had both arms crossed and pressed to her face. The black people whirled about the two children, making a vast deal of noise.

“What the devil!” exclaimed Papa, and approached his offspring.

Enley, seeing him, relaxed, the blacks drew away, Wendo lifted a scarlet face.

“That woman gave this thing to me,” Enley

## OVER NEW SEAS TO A NEW LAND

said, "and then when I bit into it she shrieked and every one came and began to jabber at us and we couldn't get away. She put it into my hand and wouldn't take it back and said it was for little buckra master, and of course I thought she meant it. And she yelled like anything."

She was still yelling, but it was now at Papa she yelled. The crowd again pressed close, but the guide suddenly burst into a roar of a command, at which they all retreated, except the woman, who stood still, sullen, head hanging.

"Give her *quattie*, she no trouble more," directed the guide.

Papa fished in his pocket for some change, gave a piece of money to the woman, who became all radiant grin, another to the man, who touched his hat and vanished, and that done, the reunited group turned back toward the hotel, not without some stern words from Papa, received in silence. Following their father, the children passed the fruit, called, it appeared, a custard apple, from hand to hand and mouth to mouth. One taste was enough for each.

"Horrible, isn't it? And smells even worse than it tastes," muttered Enley. "Gosh, but Wendo and I were scared! We couldn't get away,

## ISLAND FARM

and we knew you'd all be mad when it was time to start and you couldn't find us."

Treacy threw the remaining portion of the custard apple into the street.

"Jiminy, I hope everything doesn't taste like that here," she said, shaking her head disgustedly, adding reprovingly, "You oughtn't to have gone off like that in the first place."

The Princess looked relieved when they came up, and hastily they got into their places and the carriages hurtled off, raising a cloud of white dust. Indeed, the first part of the drive out of town and toward the hills was so dusty that nothing much but dust was visible. It hung thick on the foliage, filled the air, turned the world gray. Suddenly it was left behind. Some passing shower had wet the road, cleaned the bright trees and flaming flowers, in the midst of which the pretty bungalows stood behind their green lattices, like ladies veiled from vulgar view. The road went straight up the long upsweep of plain, and down it came a procession afoot and driving small carts and riding small donkeys, a procession black and brown, but rarely white. Almost all the women carried a load on their head, varying from a huge bunch of bananas or big basket full of provisions, to a pair of shoes, for evidently



## OVER NEW SEAS TO A NEW LAND

shoes were too precious to be used in the ordinary way; they were considered as ornaments.

At length, turning sharply to the right, they entered a gate standing open between tall white pillars, hurried up the curves of a well-kept drive, and came to a stand before the broad flight of steps leading to the veranda of a two-story white house, backed against the soft rise of a green hill, with palms grouped about it, a lawn in front, and off to one side other, small houses, clustered together, almost a tiny village.

“Here we are,” said the Princess, getting out. A negro in white coat and trousers came running down the steps to give her a helping hand. Papa directed the unloading of the bags, and the children stood staring, overcome by the splendor of this new home. Could this magnificent palace be really theirs, theirs these black men and women who were collecting, bobbing curtsies and bowing? Here then they would live, like lords and ladies, waited upon by rushing black servants!

Exchanging shy, smiling glances, they followed the Princess up the steps and under the high, dignified arch of the porch through the great green doors of Hopefield Great House, which was the name of this tropic home.

## CHAPTER II

### WHO, AND WHY, AND WHEREFROM

THE family had come adventuring to the tropics for several reasons. Maybe the chief was that they all adored change and new places and ways and people. For some time they had been living on a farm on Long Island called Makeshift Farm. It was a nice place, and the children loved it, loved it because it was free and simple, because there was the sea to swim in, the woods and fields to wander through, horses to drive and ride, chickens to care for, cows, calves, all the pleasant living things of farm life. To be sure there had been a lot of hard work for them all, and money had been noted rather for its scarcity than anything more tangible. Papa and the Princess had known considerable anxiety, some of which had touched the older children; but the fun of life, the visits of good friends, who came there from distant places with stories to tell, ready to play, to picnic, to make one of the family; the fishing and shooting, the jolly companionship

that made the brothers and sisters a happy gang, all this and more counterbalanced the hardships.

Yet, for all that, when Enley was the means of bringing about the sale of a valuable piece of land for the sum of ten thousand dollars, relieving all anxiety over bills and ways and means, and freeing the family from the necessity of remaining at Makeshift, there was great rejoicing. Much to the children's surprise it was decided that the tropics should be the next home, partly because the Princess needed a softer climate and an easier life than she had known for some time, partly because Papa and she thought that there was a real opportunity to start a business in the island that would assure a future to the boys and money enough for all of them to live comfortably and do what they chose, within reason.

In a few months it was all arranged, and they said good-by to Makeshift Farm and their friends there.

It was sad to go away, and there were tears shed. But then it was wonderful to be off to new and strange things, so the tears were soon forgotten. And now here they were, the voyage over, on the threshold of all sorts of possibilities. Of course all the children were quite wild with delight and excitement. There were six of them, as

## ISLAND FARM

you know—Zack and Enley, the two boys, and the girls, Deedah, Wendo, Treachy and her they still called the Baby, though she was past babyhood, a chubby, red-headed, tawny-skinned, and tawny-eyed child, who went about full of her own concerns, pet of all the rest and quite unspoiled by it.

Zack was a practical-minded boy, strongly built, dark of hair and eye, with a big grin that showed snow-white and even teeth. Zack preferred action to speech. He liked fishing and hunting more than anything else in the world, so far as he knew the world, and he had a way of coming plunk down on the fantastic or dreamy notions that occasionally swayed his brother and sisters with a cold, "Shucks, don't be an idiot," that was most effective. Zack had a natural instinct for outdoor things. He could do anything with a boat, was an excellent shot and a good farmer. He was too busy in the present to bother much yet with the future, but certainly that future would have little to do with four walls if he could help it.

Enley was as different in his character as in his appearance. Slender, blue-eyed, with a mop of thick blond hair, Enley had the soul of an artist and a natural gift for construction. He was little given to confidences, reserved in a friendly way, full of hidden enthusiasms, and what he began he

finished. He dreamed a good deal about what might lie ahead of him, without saying anything of his dreams, he read a great deal, and liked to go off on long solitary walks. When his feelings required expression he would burst forth into song, song of a sonorous and ringing quality but entirely without tune or rule, for he was without the musical gift, a deficiency shared by the rest of his family, excepting the Princess, who sang exquisitely, in a well-trained, mezzo-soprano voice, and could never understand why her progeny was unable to carry the simplest air. Papa was like Enley in being given to song, and now and then he used to sing "Captain Jinks of the Horse Marines," never hitting the key, driving Mumsie to distraction, but delighting his children, who joined loudly in the chorus, making a perfectly indescribable din.

Deedah wrote poems and intended to become a great writer. She was the blondest of the bunch, a long and lanky girl with her shining hair flying wildly about her shoulders, her gray eyes bright with the joy of being alive; she was always occupied, always on the move, and already, in her early teens, becoming conscious of responsibility. Life, she thought, was a pretty serious matter, and she was ever ready to give her brothers and



sisters advice on the business of living it. Wendo was considered the beauty. She had a beautifully shaped oval face with deep violet eyes and chestnut hair that fell in ringlets. She was slow in her movements and tended to plumpness, which caused her brothers, when they wished to be annoying, to call her "Fatty."

"I don't eat a bit more than you, Dee," she would complain, bitterly regarding herself. "All of you like good eats just as much as I do, and it only shows on me. Gosh, I do wish I could be skinny like you!"

"Well, I tear round a lot mor'n you do," Deedah would point out. "You're kind of lazy. You always put off doing things and you stay in bed often when the rest of us are up, and you sit round pretending you're painting when you're just mooning, hour after hour. Of course that'll make any one fat."

And Wendo would agree that this was probably so, but she would not mend her ways. There was no doubt but that she had true talent as a painter, when she buckled down to work. Usually her sketches lay about partly finished, however, till she tired of them and painted them out.

Treacy took after her brother Zack in being fort' right and of a practical bent, and she looked

## WHO, AND WHY, AND WHEREFROM

like him too, having his dark hazel eyes and brown hair, only with her it curled charmingly about her head. She was alert and graceful, always running and jumping and laughing, earnest and faithful at her tasks and a good student, without, so far, any particular bent.

There were friends of the family who thought, and said, that the life it led was altogether too unpractical and isolated for any good to come of it. How, they asked, do you expect the children to get a proper start in life unless they go to schools and mix with other children? But Papa had his own ideas as to that.

“There’s a great deal too much teaching of children,” he asserted, when these objections were made to him. “Spending most of their youth inside a schoolroom is a ridiculous waste of time. Children ought to be skipping about outdoors, not sitting in chairs. What’s the good of spending all the time you’re a child in learning to be something different? Being a child is a tremendously important thing, and nothing should stand in its way. My kids are going to enjoy being young.”

The Princess felt just the same about it.

“I want the children to have perfectly sound bodies and good health first of all,” she said to the anxious cousins and aunts who tried to have mat-

## ISLAND FARM

ters changed. "They'll catch up in their studies easily enough when they get a chance. They get taught quite enough as it is."

So they did, if in a rather sketchy, haphazard way. Their mother was familiar with several languages and a good mathematician, and Papa was able to teach them all the usual branches. Lessons went on fairly regularly. If Papa got too deeply buried in a book he was writing he canceled his courses for a time, and when the Princess thought a holiday would be pleasant for them all, she called her own teaching off. But on the whole the youngsters were pretty well trained. They all read tirelessly, they talked French easily, they were admitted to the many discussions on art and history and travel and adventure that went on when guests came, men who knew the four quarters of the globe, scientists, artists, writers. Certainly their minds were not left idle any more than their bodies.

Maybe there was something of the child in both the parents, and they didn't realize that their brood was fast growing up. They still thought of their family as a sort of permanent investment in childhood, and the fact that these youngsters were destined to turn into men and women and must get ready for that certainty had not occurred to

## WHO, AND WHY, AND WHEREFROM

them other than in casual flashes. They were both of them happy-go-lucky, with a pleasant faculty for believing in what they liked, expecting what they wanted. Somehow, things always turned out right, or always had. So they made what plans appealed to them and bothered very little over the difficulties in the way.

But there is something stronger than plans, more certain than hope. Time. Time, that nothing can prevent from bringing its changes, its developments. Time, that opens some doors and closes others, that hews paths where no paths were, that makes men and women out of all the babies who keep on living.

There is not a great deal of time taken up in the story told in this book, but yet there are considerable changes. It is not the same family at the end that it was in the beginning, even though it seems to be. Zack and Enley, Deedah, Wendo, Treachy, even the Baby, are changed, some more, some less, by their stay on this tropic island. For time, even on a tropic island, where nature seems to dream in an eternal summer, is the busiest, most compelling fact in the world. No one is exempt from its force, not even you who read. Peter Pan is the only child I know of who never grew up, and even Peter—but Peter isn't in my story.

## CHAPTER III

### LAPPED IN LUXURY

**D**EEDAH stood under a tree completely covered with large purple flowers, intently observing a humming bird that flew from one to another of the gorgeous blooms, gorgeous himself in green and gold and scarlet. Deedah was clothed in thin white over pale blue, with a blue band about her blond hair, and privately she thought that she resembled a fairy princess in some story full of pathos and beauty.

Coming straight from the hardships and privations of Makeshift Farm, the new life on the tropic island appeared to the children the incarnation of all they had ever imagined of luxury, of marvel, of adventure. Enley had voiced this feeling that very morning as the gang returned from a swim in the large marble pool glimmering in the streaked sun and shadow of its broad eaves thatched with palm leaves; "I guess even the biggest king in the world can't beat this layout," were his words, and the others agreed.

## LAPPED IN LUXURY

“And there seem to be perfect hundreds of servants,” Wendo added. “I saw a new one as I came downstairs. She was polishing the floor in the big hall, skating about with wads of coconut fiber tied to her feet, and when she saw me she gave a screech and ran away.”

“They do seem to be afraid of us,” observed Treachy, who was munching a *cherrymoya*, a delicious brown-skinned fruit the size of a small peach. “I wonder why?”

“Maybe because we’re Americans,” Wendo returned. “I guess they’ve heard how we Yankees licked the English and so they’re naturally scared.”

At this moment a dignified little negro with gray wool and a disapproving expression advanced toward them from the house. He was the butler and his name was Darbie.

“Time to dress for your luncheon, young ladies and gentlemen,” he told them, in the precise English he used, putting in now and then a superfluous *h*. “H’it’s within half an hour of the time, and Madam says on no account to be late. Shall h’I send Sadie to help you dress?” He spoke more particularly to Deedah.

“No thanks,” she replied hastily. “We can get



## ISLAND FARM

dressed all right by ourselves. We'll be in time O. K."

Darbie bowed slightly and withdrew toward the servants' quarters. The children, giggling, looked after him.

"Gosh, I wish he could have seen us in the old days," Zack spluttered. "Dress for lunch, eh? Well, we've certainly got to get out of our wet bathing suits!"

"I've had a clean shirt on every single day since we came," Enley confided. "I can never find the old one in the morning."

"They come in after we're asleep and snatch everything away," Zack informed him. "But where did we get so many shirts?"

"Oh, Mumsie bought just stacks of things the day she and Papa went to town," said Deedah. "These shops here are ever so cheap, she said, and she wants us to be decent."

Decorously, the five went up and put on fresh clothes, the boys appearing in blue linen suits, the girls in lovely little thin dresses. They found the Baby, also fresh from a bath and in a bright little gown of pale yellow, very short, with bare legs and yellow socks and slippers, playing horse with Darbie on the veranda, for Darbie unbent to her.

"Giddap, giddap, giddap," she shouted, hauling

## LAPPED IN LUXURY

on the long reins of cord that Darbie had hooked over his shoulders. "Go on, you nice little pony, we'll soon be home now."

But Darbie hastily divested himself of his trappings, resumed his dignity, and hastened away to announce luncheon, served in a great oblong room sweetly shadowed by the long green-latticed Venetian blinds or *jalousies* as they were called, that took the place of glazed windows. The table glittered with glass and silver, there was a bowl of roses in the center, lace doilies on the table instead of a tablecloth, and the food was served by Darbie and Sadie with quite a flourish. Avacado pears to begin with, a big piece of baked *barracuda* to follow, with stewed *choyas*, a sort of squash, and baked breadfruit. Then came a delicious dessert made out of ripe guavas. At each place stood a glass of clear liquid in which floated tiny shining particles. This was the pure juice of the green coconut, a cool, fresh vivid sort of beverage the whole family had taken to wholeheartedly from the first sip. Darbie had assured them that it was "Very, very good for the digestion, Sah."

It was after this stately meal that Deedah had come out to stand under the tree and to think of herself as a fairy princess.

## ISLAND FARM

"Of course," she considered, pessimistically, "It won't last. Something'll happen, you see." She addressed the humming bird, who flew off. "Anyhow," she added, turning away, "while the charm don't bust, it's great."

She saw Wendo, miraculous in embroidered pink voile, with her long chestnut hair in spiral curls, advancing toward her. "Hi," called this apparition, "Mumsie's going to take you and me to tea with her at Government House, at four o'clock. And we'll meet knights and lords and ladies and things."

"We will? What'll we say to 'em?" Deedah was apprehensive.

"There's going to be a children's party too, with croquet and games to play. Maybe we won't have to say anything."

"I wish it was going to be a jousting tournament," said Deedah.

They drove over in the victoria drawn by two bay horses and guided by Darbie, who joined the duties of coachman to those of a butler. Papa went too, fine in white tennis trousers and shirt and a dark blue coat of serge, while the Princess was lovely in filmy gray and blue with a wide gray hat. It was certainly wonderful! And when they

## LAPPED IN LUXURY

reached the grounds of Government House it seemed to Wendo and Deedah that all the world of splendid people must be there. There were hundreds of guests on the broad lawns, going up and down the steps of the wide verandas, or in and out of gay little kiosks scattered about, and all of them in bright and lovely colors or in suits like their father's, or in beautiful uniforms with scarlet coats and gold braid. Tables loaded with cakes and fruits and good things to drink stood shining under awnings, servants in livery moved about. The two girls followed Papa and Mumsie toward where a handsome couple stood at the top of the steps before the open doors of the house, looking affable and chatting with the passing stream. Presently they reached this couple in their turn, and after a few words Mumsie said:

"I want to present my two little daughters, Sir Henry and Lady Black."

The large couple beamed down at them, and Sir Henry took Deedah's hand in his huge one:

"So you've deserted America for our Jewel of the Tropics?" he remarked.

"Yes, Sir Knight," replied Deedah, breathlessly.

## ISLAND FARM

Sir Henry laughed benignly, shaking his head.

"You are one, aren't you?" the little girl inquired anxiously.

"One what?"

"Knight?" There was a world of awe in her voice.

"Sorry, but I'm a baronet."

"Oh!" Deedah registered vast disappointment. Still depressed, she was whirled away with the advancing family group to the lawns and the tables, the cakes, the orangeade and ices and general delight. Solemnly she ate, Wendo close beside her. Smiling ladies looked at them, and before long small girls were brought to them, names exchanged, and they were told to run along and play.

Pale little girls they were, in fluttering thin dresses with bare knees and shining slippers, and bows tying back their hair. And they spoke in neat low voices, clipping their words.

"Are you really Americans?" asked one of them.

"Of course we are," Wendo answered.

"You don't seem so very odd."

"Americans aren't odd," Deedah informed the child. "Haven't you ever been in America?"

"No indeed. My father's in the Colonial Serv-

## LAPPED IN LUXURY

ice, and we've only just come here from China. I like China best."

"Don't you like England?"

"Home? Well, rather. But I've hardly been Home at all."

"I suppose England's so small that most of you can't stay there," Wendo, interested, hazarded.

The girl laughed, a superior laugh, which vaguely irritated both Wendo and Deedah.

"England small? England's the greatest country in the world," she declared.

The sisters gasped. Hadn't she ever heard how England had been licked by America in the Revolution and again in 1812?

"It's not. We are," Deedah retorted hotly. "The U. S. A."

"Oh, yes, I daresay!" exclaimed the girl, and moved haughtily away.

They stared after her, dumfounded, furious.

"Who do you want to kill?" it was their mother's voice, amused.

And she only laughed when they told her.

"You must get used to that kind of thing," she replied. "You will find wherever you go in this world that the people in that part of it think it the best and finest and most wonderful on earth. And each is right."



## ISLAND FARM

“Mumsie! England *isn't* the greatest country in the world! We are.”

“You must remember that your little English friend was thinking of the British Empire, that extends round the world, and whose history reaches back to the times of the Romans. But come, we know that America is the greatest country for us, and that's good enough, isn't it?”

No, not by a jugful, it wasn't, but what could be done about it? And as two other girls came up and asked them to join in a game of croquet, they marched off, and played with such earnestness and passion that they won, some consolation to their injured patriotism.

Home again, they sat on the step, telling Treachy and the boys of their adventures.

“The eats were good, and lots of 'em,” said Wendo, “but all the children were . . . well, awfully polite, but yet sort of sassy inside, just as if they thought they knew something we didn't. They had some good games, new ones, and they played ever so well, too. But I'd like to show 'em a few of our own . . . might teach 'em how to dance a war dance,” and Wendo grinned, thinking of those decorous and soft-spoken little girls leaping and grunting and hi-yi-ing in the war

## LAPPED IN LUXURY

dance of the Omahas, which they had learned from an uncle who had passed years with the Indians.

Deedah told of the dispute as to the relative greatness of England and America, which was received with a sense of bitter injury.

“You ought to have asked her what about Paul Jones, just for one little thing,” declared Zack, “sailing round and round their dinkey island challenging any of their ships to come out and fight him, and all of ’em scared blue. Gee, the nerve of her!”

“And this Sir Henry turns out not to be a Knight at all, but only a baronet,” Deedah continued.

The tropic night was humming and shrilling with the intense chorus of insects and frogs. Over the hill showed large bright stars in unfamiliar arrangements, the Southern Cross swinging low over the horizon its irregular diamond. A heavy sweet odor poured up from the garden, while from the servants’ quarters came an eerie, rhythmic monotone of song. Inside the house barefooted girls moved, setting the table for dinner, carrying tall candles in bronze sticks. Strange foods were cooking in the kitchen out under the big mango tree, soon to be placed before them, where they sat in large chairs, in pretty dresses and smart

## ISLAND FARM

suits. America seemed far away, Makeshift Farm a queer dream life that had never been. Into the hearts of the children came a faint stir of homesickness.

Life began early in Hopefield Great House. By half-past five the youngsters were up, by six breakfast was done with, and then began the most active part of the day. It was heavenly fresh and cool during those early morning hours, and Deedah and Enley especially loved to go riding at that time. Two pretty little horses had been bought, besides the big bays used for the carriage, and named Rikki-Tikki and Tavi, after the mongoose in Kipling's story, the one name doing for the two. Tavi was sorrel, with golden mane and tail, Rikki-Tikki a buckskin, and slightly heavier in build. Enley rode him.

There were several good rides leading towards the mountains, winding along the edges of cañons and over forested hills, some mere paths that found bright brooks and crossed them, and revealed the strange plants and trees and flowers of the tropic jungle. The air was sweet beyond belief after the heavy night dews, and the curling mists among the mountains like magic veils shifting in some great theater.

## LAPPED IN LUXURY

"Aren't you glad the others don't like to ride as much as we do?" remarked Enley, as they cantered off one especially exquisite morning. "Golly, Tikki's as lively as a rubber ball!"

"You bet I am! Say, Enley, let's take that little wood road beyond the great rock to-day, the one we've meant to take several times and never have."

"All righty. Huee, look at this stretch for a gallop!"

They tore down it, laughing, then slowed to a trot at a rise. Down toward them came many negroes, men and women, slim lanky boys, solemn little girls. Most were burdened with baskets of produce, *loquots* in golden piles, *guineps*, a plum-like fruit growing in bunches, piled brownish-black yams, scarlet *ackies* with their bright black seeds, small yellow melons and paler passion fruit. Striped and spotted mangoes too, tasting faintly of turpentine but delicious for all that, and green, scaly-skinned breadfruit, which the children had been surprised to find needed to be baked like a potato, and tasted not unlike a very good one.

A picturesque and friendly procession, nodding handkerchiefed heads, calling greetings. But where an old ruined tower crowning a huge rock

## ISLAND FARM

overhung the ravine the two left the highroad and plunged into the instant seclusion of the forest.

The little road went sharply down, crossed a brook buried under maidenhair fern and begonias and wandered under huge tree ferns where birds twittered in the shade. It grew too narrow to be ridden abreast, and Enley rode ahead, his hat in one hand, his thick blond hair standing up, tossed into the curls he detested. Deedah in her linen suit and small close hat, flushed with exercise, eager-eyed, pressed close to her brother.

Suddenly they turned a corner and came upon a small cabin hidden almost under thick banana plants. Two small children, entirely naked, played before the open door. There were no windows, and the inside of the tiny dwelling looked black as a cave. The two babies gave a squeak like frightened animals, and scurried into the blackness. The next minute a woman appeared in the doorway. She was tall, thin and her wool was white as snow, standing out all round her face in wild disorder.

“Howdy, young buckra massa and missie,” she called, in a high, singsong voice. “What for you come thissaway? Come to lissen Annancy tale, eh? Hear how *duppie* get Annancy one time, and how

## LAPPED IN LUXURY

she fool him, ayh! Give poor old woman silver sixpenny, I tell you Annancy story."

Advancing, she laid a hand on Enley's bridle rein. She was uncanny, eerie, dressed in a long straight cotton garment of dingy grey, a chain of dark stones round her skinny neck. Rikki-Tikki snorted, and Enley pulled the rein.

"Let go," he ordered. "We've just come for a ride. If this is your road we'll go back."

"Mus' lissen Annancy story now." The old woman's eyes gleamed at him, and her yellow teeth showed in a grin like a snarl.

"What's Annancy?" asked Deedah, shoving close to Enley.

"Maybe great witch, maybe Duppie's wife, maybe fox woman . . . come into cabin, I tell you. Tell you magic tale, tell you fortune for sixpence."

She stepped nearer and laid a clawlike hand on Deedah's knee, still retaining her clutch on Enley's rein. Deedah felt a creep of fear.

"Let us alone," said the girl. "We want to go on," and she urged Tavi, who reared slightly, nervous and fretful.

"Can't go dissa road. Sink hole at end, deep, deep sink hole. Duppie live there."

"Come Deedah, let's turn back," said Enley.



## ISLAND FARM

He wrenched at the bridle, striking his pony with his crop, and Deedah swung Tavi's head round violently, so that the spirited little horse gave a sharp spring, startling the old woman and forcing her to drop her hold and step out of the way. In an instant the two children were free and headed back up the path.

Looking over her shoulder, Deedah saw the old woman raise her thin arms high over her head and shake them. A thin scream came from her mouth, while behind her the two pickanninies set up a frightened howl.

"Annancy she get you. I put voodoo spell on you," screeched the beldame.

"Throw her a shilling, Enley, quick. Guess she's crazy," begged Deedah. Enley complied, and the woman, ceasing her noise, ran to pick up the bit of silver.

"Good-by, my love, my darlin'," she called shrilly. "I no harm young buckras, nex' time come I tell you lovely story," and her hands raised again, she stood staring after them as they disappeared round the bend.

"I wonder whether there are many more like her," Deedah remarked somewhat breathlessly, as the two regained the highroad. "Gee, but I was scared!"

## LAPPED IN LUXURY

"I'm glad we were on horseback," declared Enley. "Wonder what she meant by a sink hole."

"And that Annancy she kept talking about?"

They had no answer to either question, though both Annancy and sink holes grew familiar enough in time, remaining not the less sinister.

The adventures of that morning were not over, for as they rode up the driveway of Hopefield, they heard a commotion ahead of them. Screams, howls, laughter, a babel of chatter.

Hurrying their horses they came into view of the servants' quarters, where a group was collected. Zack, Wendo, and Treachy danced excitedly round the outer edge of the milling negroes, from whom the hubbub proceeded.

"Duppie got me, duppie got me," they heard, rising above the rest of the din.

Full-tilt they approached, and saw that it was the cook, a fat negress, from whom this yell was coming. She was springing about, and on her head crouched a queer small form, that screeched too.

"What is it?" called Enley to Zack.

"It's my monkey. He's got into her hair and we can't get him off. She won't let us, hopping round that way."

"O-o-o-o-o-oo!" screamed the cook, leaping

## ISLAND FARM

madly, while the monkey, its four hands buried in her wool, swung back and forth, chattering. The rest of the blacks crowded close, yelling, laughing, gesticulating.

Suddenly Papa appeared, gave one glance, tossed aside the ring of lookers-on and, grabbing the monkey by its neck, choked it off and tore it free. The small animal wrapped arms and tail round his arm, and sobbed.

Zack dashed forward, crying, "Don't hurt it, Dad, it's mine."

"Yours? Then take it," and Papa stripped the animal from his arm and handed it over. Zack grabbed it close, and the other children drew near, Enley and Deedah dismounting quickly. The monkey buried its funny little face in Zack's coat, shivering, the cook sat down on the step of the kitchen shed, moaning and feeling her head, the group scattered. Papa turned back to the house, throwing over his shoulder the brief command:

"Never let that thing loose again."

"But where did you get it, Zack?" was the eager inquiry from Enley.

"Bought it with my last American money from a sailor with rings in his ears, and he said he'd grow as big as me one day, the monkey I mean."

"Where did you find the sailor?"

## LAPPED IN LUXURY,

Zack glanced round to make certain no older person was within hearing.

“I’ve had a peach of a morning,” he whispered. “But I don’t want them to know up at the house.”

Enley nodded. “Come on, let’s go into the orange orchard, and you can tell us,” he proposed. And the circle of boys and girls proceeded in the designated direction, admiring the little new pet, which was now sitting up gravely and staring round, perched on the arm of the proud Zack.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE SHARK, THE SAILOR, AND THE MONKEY

**I** FOUND that Charles was going to drive to town this morning to get some stuff coming on the steamer," Zack informed his audience, as they sat down under a palm at the edge of the orange orchard, their supply of oranges ready to hand, a shining golden heap. They had given the monkey a banana, which he held clutched in one hand, mournfully, the other scratching thoughtfully at various parts of his person. The end of a leash attached to a small collar round his neck was firmly held by Zack, while the monkey, in a way that bewitched them all, stretched out one hind foot with which he clasped the extended finger of Enley's left hand.

"Isn't that too cunning!" exclaimed Treachy.  
"How does his hand feel, Enley?"

"Soft as silk; but it's his foot," said Enley.  
"Go on, Zack."

"Well, of course they probably wouldn't have let me go with him, if I'd asked, so I told Charles

## THE SHARK, SAILOR, AND MONKEY

I'd be down at the gate when he went through and climb aboard. He was scared to let me, said old Darbie'd skin 'im alive if he found out, but I told him not to be an idiot. So I went with him, and it was fun, for we kept meeting niggers that knew Charles, and stopping to gas with 'em, and some of 'em tried to sell us things, but we just laughed at 'em, one of the women had a donkey she wanted to get rid of, it was cute too, she kept running along after us, and the donkey whoopin' along after her, screeching out that it was only two shillings and was just what the little buckra needed . . . I like her gall! So we got to town and went to the pier and of course it would be hours before the things were ready to take, so I said to Charles, come on, lets see the sights. He was scared again, he always makes a fuss whatever you want to do, but we went, and I told him I wanted a swim, so he took me along the water front till we reached a little winding path under coconuts that twisted a lot and at last we came out by a tiny little cove, nice yellow sand and little waves rolling up, oh, boy! It took me 'bout five seconds to get out of my clothes and splash in, and gee, but the water was good! I went swimmin' along, head under water most of the time, and when I got good and far out I rolled over to float.



## ISLAND FARM

Pretty soon I lifted my head to see what Charles was doing, and by gum, he was jumping about like a jack-in-the-box, and yelling to beat the band.

“I had water in my ears an’ I couldn’t make out what he was howling about at first, then I got it:

“ ‘Big shark comin’, him goin’ for eat you, oy-oy-oy-oy,’ he was screeching, waving his arms like a maniac.

“Well, you can just bet I didn’t wait to hear more. I began to put for the shore lickety-split, and I guess the champion swimmer of the whole world couldn’t have gone any faster. And I got a couple of looks back of me, and there sure enough, some way out, I saw a triangular fin cutting the water!”

“Gee,” murmured Enley at this point, and a deep sigh came from the rest.

“I was so scared my stomach all shriveled up. Every stroke I thought I’d feel teeth in me. At last I struck shallow water, but I didn’t have breath enough to stand up, I just sort of rolled in, and Charles ran into the water and dragged me out the last bit. He can’t swim a stroke. He looked perfectly gray, and I guess I was rather pasty myself. Gosh!”

“What did the shark do?” asked Wendo, in the moment’s silence that followed.

## THE SHARK, SAILOR, AND MONKEY

“Kept swimmin’ about, not more than twenty yards from shore, I could see its long dark body just as clear. . . . I’ll bet it was ten feet long or maybe more.”

“Well,” said Deedah thoughtfully, thinking of her and Enley’s encounter with the witchwoman, “seems to me this is a fierce sort of a place, this island. Maybe we’ll all get killed here, or something.”

“Shucks,” returned Zack. “Just got to keep a watch out, that’s all. Well, as soon as I got dressed we went back to town, and had to go to market so that Charles could buy some of that awful salt fish the niggers love so, and while he was bargaining away with a lot of old women, I found that sailor. He was a dandy, big and blond with a red neck and face and gold rings in his ears, and ever so friendly. Said he felt he’d known me for years the minute after we began to talk. He had a bottle of rum in one pocket and hauled it out and showed it to me and said I could have a swig as lief as not, but I didn’t. He’d just come into port from Australia, can you beat that, all the way round Cape Horn, and they’d stopped a long time at Buenos Aires, he said it was about the finest city in the world all full of palaces and beautiful ladies and kings that had got tired of

## ISLAND FARM

their own lands. And he said a man could get a drink every two steps, if he felt the need of one. Then he said would I come along to where he was stayin' for a day or two, and he'd show me something.

"Charles was still fighting away for that salt fish of his, so I went, and we got to a funny little cabin with a yard in front, full of pineapples planted in rows, and there was a black girl there, I guess maybe she was his wife, he called her darling, and told her to get his monkey, and she went in and came out with this monk." Zack laid a caressing hand on the small animal's back, upon which it burst into wild chatter, leaped away as far as the leash would allow, and then tore off a piece of banana skin and flung it in Zack's direction. All the youngsters broke out laughing.

"But Zack, weren't you scared he might kidnap you and take you off to sea in his ship?" demanded Treachy.

"Nope. He was O. K. So then he said he'd sell me the monkey for five dollars, and that it's been caught in the heart of the Amazon forest, and her name was Eliza, after an old sweetheart of his in Liverpool. I told him I only had one dollar left, so he said that seein' it was I he'd let me have it for that. And then he told me he was on his way

## THE SHARK, SAILOR, AND MONKEY

to New York, but that the ship would come back in about three months and if I'd come and meet him he'd tattoo a picture on my arm for me. And he gave me these." Zack produced a package of small dark brown cigarettes and showed them. "Look, they're brown, like cigars, and I bet they're strong all right. Want to take a try, Enley?"

"Sure, later. Gosh, Zack, d'you think he'd tattoo my arm too, if I went with you?"

"And ours too," chorused the three girls.

"No, he wouldn't tattoo a girl's arm, but I guess if I told him Enley was my brother he'd do it for him. So we said good-by and shook hands and he called me shipmate."

"And how did the monkey get into the cook's hair, and make all that racket?" Wendo asked.

"Oh, I got out of the wagon when we reached the gate and told Charles to take it on up to the stable and I'd come for it there, but when he stopped at the kitchen to leave that fish it got loose somehow and jumped on her head. Jiminy, it was some excitement, wasn't it?"

They grinned at each other joyously at the recollection.

"I heard her yelling that a duppie had got her, and we heard about a duppie too," Deedah told

## ISLAND FARM

the crowd. "Enley and I had an adventure ourselves."

Naturally she had to narrate it, and at the end Enley remarked that duppies seemed to be devils. "They just think this island is full of 'em," he concluded.

"Let's ask Charles what a sink hole is, and Annancy and duppies," proposed Zack. "He'll know, sure."

"Where are you goin' to keep the monkey?" Treachy inquired.

"I'll fix you a hutch for it," promised Enley, who was the carpenter and builder of the family. "Come along, let's find a box."

The bunch scattered, leaving the monkey tied to a tree. The boys went to the stable to find Charles and materials for the cage, the girls to get ready for their morning swim. Charles looked frightened when Enley asked him about the old woman and her stories.

"You don' want fuss with him, Massa Zack an' Enley, no sir! Him big witchwoman, and Annancy, she devil woman; bring duppie to ha'nt you, put voodoo on you." He shook his head, refusing to go into particulars. To the question about what a sink hole was he was more communicative. It appeared that there were deep

## THE SHARK, SAILOR, AND MONKEY

and magic holes all over the island, lived in by the duppies and used for terrible matters, holes from which, if you chanced to fall therein, there was no escape possible. "You keep far off from sink hole and old witchwoman," was Charles' reiterated advice.

Meanwhile Enley had expertly put together a comfortable hutch, latticed in front, with a nest of hay. Zach went off to reclaim his Eliza, only to come hurrying back with the desperate news that the animal had escaped.

"It's gone," he cried, showing the empty collar hanging at the end of the leash. "I hunted all about and couldn't see a sign of it. Isn't that the darndest luck!"

Charles once again registered fear.

"Tell you that was duppie sure," he said. "Him vanish clear away like that, that bad. Come again and ha'nt you . . . wait and you see."

Zack scorned the duppie theory, but he was heartbroken at losing his pet. A monkey caught by a sailor with gold rings in his ears in the heart of the Amazon forest was pretty close to authentic adventure, and now it was gone. But maybe it would return, not as a duppie, but itself.



## ISLAND FARM

In spite of Charles' predictions and the children's hopes, however, Eliza was seen no more.

Sometime later Mumsie announced that she was going round the island with Papa and the Baby, driven by Darbie and the bays, a five-day trip. They were going to look for a place to buy and settle on permanently.

"So we aren't going to stay here?" asked Deedah. "But I knew it wouldn't last."

"Not here, of course. You know our plan is to find a suitable location to start a farm in. We are going to raise spring vegetables during the winter months for the New York market. It ought to be an excellent money-maker, for labor and production costs are low here, and we shall get top prices for all we ship away. It is going to provide a future for the boys, and when we're really started we may make enough to allow of us all enjoying a chance to travel and study. We'll look about for a good manager later, but at first we must all buckle down to making a go of the thing ourselves."

"D'you mean we've all got to work again like at Makeshift Farm? I thought we were rich now and didn't have to work and would have servants

## THE SHARK, SAILOR, AND MONKEY

and everything. . . .” Deedah’s voice was a wail.

“Don’t say ‘*like at*,’ Deedah, and don’t be absurd,” returned the Princess severely, but with a laugh in her somewhere. “Of course we aren’t going to live in idleness the rest of our lives. Ten thousand dollars won’t last long, you know, if we don’t do something to bring in an income. We expect to spend most of what’s left of it in buying the land for the farm.”

“But Mumsie, we didn’t make any money when we were on Makeshift Farm, so why should we make any here?”

“The circumstances are quite different, my dear. But run along, don’t bother me any more now, I’ve got to get ready for the trip. See if you can find Sadie, and tell her I want her.”

And next morning at sunrise they drove away, looking very nice in the victoria, their bags beside Darbie on the box, and Papa and Mumsie and the Baby all together on the back seat, with some rugs rolled in front of them, for it might be cold in the mountains.

“We’ll bring a home back with us,” laughed the Princess as they started, waving back at the row of five little people standing rather forlornly on the veranda steps. The Baby waved too, and

## ISLAND FARM

kissed her hand, and they all kissed theirs back at her. It seemed flat when they'd gone.

But not for long. The two boys, an hour later, got themselves covered with ticks, the terrible tiny tropic tick, no larger than a grain of pepper, that hangs in bunches of thousands on grass blades or leaves, to be knocked off in passing. Whereupon it spreads its hordes in haste all over your body, holes in, and before long each individual tick is the center of a red and burning, itching spot. The only way to get rid of the pests is to bathe in kerosene, a disagreeable task. The boys performed it, and came from the operation smelling strong as smoky lamps.

"You can't go a step off the paths in this island without something horrid happening to you," mused Wendo, regarding them. "It's a beautiful island and its exciting too, but it isn't somehow very homelike."

"Well, it's going to be our home forever and ever and ever," intoned Deedah.

"I was reading *Coral Island* over again last night," went on Wendo, "and it was lots of fun to know all they talked about . . . breadfruit an' banyan trees and those things, and lizards and palm trees, only the books leave out such a lot of things too. Never speak of these darned ticks,

## THE SHARK, SAILOR, AND MONKEY

and yesterday I emptied two scorpions out of my shoes, and there was a horrible beetle in my room that scared me so I went and slept with Treachy.”

While they talked, they had been making a slow way down a little moss-grown path by a brook to a favorite pool where they all loved to wade and catch small fish. But at this instant Treachy gave a shrill screech, pointing a rigid finger to one side. “What’s that?” she yelled.

A huge crested creature with fringy wattles, bow-legged in front, a long body extending to a longer tail, reared its frightful head in the undergrowth, staring at them with red eyes, unwinking, unmoving. Petrified, the group stood staring back. Suddenly, with a swift turn, the thing disappeared.

Deedah spoke, a trifle thickly:

“It’s only just an iguana,” she said. “It doesn’t do anything bad, and it’s ever so good to eat.”

“It is? Huh, it looks as if it might do the eating,” said Zack.

“I’m going back,” declared Wendo firmly, turning to do so. “I think it’s creeping at us under those big leaves,” and she led the stampede that swept back to the house in short order. Arrived there they decided for a swim in the pool,

## ISLAND FARM

and were soon diving and splashing in the cool bright water.

“What do you think about this farm we’re going to have?” Treachy asked Enley, sitting on the edge of the marble brink, their legs in the water.

Enley, his hands clasped round his knees, brooding, his fair, tousled hair sparkling with water drops, made no reply. But Zack, his round dark face and black hair emerging slick from the pool, heard the question.

“Well, I promised my sailor I’d meet him in three months down at the market, and all I want to know is where this great farm is goin’ to be, so I can get back here in time for that,” he stated.

“Shucks, you’ll never see him again,” prophesied Deedah. “And what would he care for a farmer, anyway?”

“He’d care for me,” returned Zack.

## CHAPTER V

### THE END OF THE RAINBOW

PAPA and the Princess and the Baby came back radiant from their tour of the island, and to the chorus of inquiries hurled at them by their excited offspring, they returned only a smiling "Wait till you see it."

"Oh but, Mumsie, tell us! Where is it, and is it like this place, and are there lots of oranges and mangoes on it, and is it by the sea so we can go swimming???" the questions continued to pour in, but it wasn't one bit of use. They wouldn't tell anything, but simply grinned and shook their heads. As for the Baby, she was no use at all. She had acquired a parrot with a rose-colored head, the rest of it being green, and she would talk of nothing but Polly.

So, a week later, they said good-by to Hopefield Great House and its corps of servants, except Charles and Sadie, who were going with them, and on a morning all pearly with fog, they started. It was a cavalcade. First went a two-



## ISLAND FARM

seated phaëton drawn by the big bays, Ada and Pete, driven by Charles. Into this were packed the Princess, the Baby, Treachy and Enley, with a vast number of packets and bags. Next came the buckboard driven by Deedah, with Zack beside her and Wendo and Papa on the back seat, though Papa was there only at intervals since he liked walking better than driving, and always got out at the hills, going so fast that he left the toiling horses far behind, and was only caught up with when there was a long down slope and the horses could trot along smartly.

After the buckboard came a big wagon drawn by mules and loaded with the manifold household goods and trunks that hadn't even been unpacked yet, since leaving America. Sadie rode on this, and the mules were driven by an old negro who would take them back after delivering the load. The parrot in her cage rode with Sadie, and screeched furiously at intervals. She was not the only pet. Woof of course came along, bounding from one carriage to another, refusing to ride in any of them. And Deedah had a black kitten given to her by Lady Black that Treachy carried in a basket on her knees. The kitten was called Ermyntrude, which was Lady Black's name, Trudy for short. Papa said he thought it was

## THE END OF THE RAINBOW

appropriate that the kitten should be black, seeing whom it came from, which tickled the children.

They were to take two days on the trip, spending the first night at a little mountain hamlet with a good hotel, where Papa and the Princess had already stayed. This was exciting, and every one felt like pioneers. Enley wished they were traveling in a prairie schooner, "a great big one drawn by eight oxes," he said, to which Papa responded, "eight *what?*" but was not answered, as they all burst into added comment, Zack wishing they were all on broncs, Deedah that they might shoot an antelope for their dinner, Treachy that they could sleep outside, Wendo that they could see some Indians. The Baby, aware that something was expected, shrieked delightedly, and said, "and great big ogra too," which Papa announced completed the requirements.

All this chatter went on at the luncheon stop, which was a beautiful place recommended by Charles, a greensward by a purling brook, just as it might have been in a fairy story, with unfamiliar trees making lovely dappled shade and somewhere in the woods a solitaire singing, sweetest of all tropic song birds, with two long, exquisite notes full of a haunting melancholy.

Lunch was unpacked from a big basket; and

## ISLAND FARM

proved a good one, two roast chickens, hard-boiled eggs, sandwiches of various sorts, a cake, guava paste, green coconuts to drink, and of course fruit in variety. The parrot sat at one side, out of the cage, restrained from too far wandering by its leash attached to one small gray leg, Woof not far away, his eyes fixed with passionate earnestness on the food. Deedah held the frightened Trudy, giving it snips of chicken and egg which it growled over faintly. Sadie and Charles, giggling together, sat not far away, eating their own peculiar food, and the horses munched at oats, tossing their heads and stamping at the flies. If this wasn't pioneering, what then was? As for the mules, they had been left behind at a bend in the road where their driver preferred to camp. Sadie had walked up from there.

By degrees a circle of blacks added themselves to the party, squatting at a discreet distance, intently watching all that went on, exchanging soft muttered comment, giggling a little. But when any of the family turned a head to look at them they shuffled backward, dropping their heads like wild things, only to come close again as the gaze was removed. Charles didn't let them get too

## THE END OF THE RAINBOW

near, commanding them back with a royal sweep of the arm and a fierce:

“You git right out of yere, black man and woman. No bother the buckra.” And back they went.

The hour allowed was soon gone, however, and packing and harnessing began. Suddenly Deedah discovered that Trudy was missing, and set up a wail:

“We’ve got to find her, Mumsie. She’ll die if we leave her behind us.”

A hunt began and cries of “Trudy, Trudy, here kitty, kitty, kitty,” but kitty remained in hiding. All the negroes joined cheerfully in the chase, scratching about in the undergrowth, laughing. Time went on, and finally the Princess said desperately:

“I’m sorry, Deedah, but if you can’t watch your pet it’s your own fault. We’ve got to go this minute.”

Deedah, struggling with her tears, realized that this was the hard truth. Trudy must be deserted.

Just at this moment a sudden silence fell on the chattering negroes. The effect was startling, for they had been keeping up a steady racket. Into the circle where the cloth had lain stepped a strange figure. Tall, thin, wrapped in a long dull

## ISLAND FARM

cloak, a scarlet bandanna round her head, a witch-like woman stood before them. Her arms were bare, and in them she held the lost Trudy.

Enley, who was nearest her, stared and then retreated slightly, clutching Deedah:

"Its the old sink-hole witch," he muttered.

But Deedah, seeing her cat, ran forward.

"Give my kitty to me," she demanded.

The woman drew back a step.

"What will the little missie give old woman for her cat?" she asked, in a thin, wheedling voice.

"Charles, make her give it to me," Deedah called to the man, who had been helping in the hunt. But Charles only stared dumbly, and his face was gray. As for the rest of the negroes, they had all disappeared, slinking off in various directions, all but Sadie, who sat on a fallen stump, her apron over her head, rocking slightly as if in pain.

Papa stepped up to the woman, a piece of silver in his hand.

"Give the animal to me," he said.

But the old woman stepped close to Deedah and handed her the kitten.

"You no forget me," she said. "I tell you Annancy story some day, fine fortune for you and little buckra massa." She leered at Deedah, who,

## THE END OF THE RAINBOW

snatching her pet, stepped quickly away, feeling as she told Enley later, "decidedly creepy."

Dropping Papa a curtsy, the hag took the offered money, shook it in the air over her head and slipped back into the cover of the woods.

"Remarkable old person," commented Papa. "Good at cat catching, anyhow."

"Queer how she affected the other blacks," said the Princess. "They've all run off like scared rabbits."

Charles, ostentatiously whistling, brought up the phaëton, but when Papa asked him if he knew who the old creature was he shook his head.

"La, Massa, me know nothing," he said.

Papa stared at him, and then, as he went off after the other carriage, remarked:

"The boy's gray with fright. He knows who she is all right, and she must be an old lady of importance."

"She's a witch," Enley announced. "She lives in a black hut and tells stories about devils."

"The deuce she does. What do you know about her?"

Deedah told of their adventure.

"And at last I got Sadie to tell who she was," she concluded. "Sadie says she's an *obeah* woman, a maker of voodoo, and that she's terribly



## ISLAND FARM

rich and can make any one die by putting a charm on them."

Papa and the Princess exchanged a glance.

"Well, cats and witches are supposed to be affinities," said Papa, smiling, "but I wouldn't believe all Sadie says, if I were you."

"Of course I won't. I don't believe any of it."

At last they were on their way again.

The drive the remainder of that day was wilder and more spectacular. They kept mounting higher, crossing deep gorges on high bridges, skirting abrupt precipices. Now and then the shining floor of the ocean came into view, rising like a great blue wall to meet the horizon on a level with their eyes. Once they saw a storm passing over it, darkening the water, sweeping along swiftly, vanishing. The down-dropping slopes were thick with impenetrable forest, that glittered in the sun, for most tropic foliage is highly polished. At one place they saw a long torrent dropping its snow-white burden of wild waters, and now and again they caught a glimpse of some village under palms.

At sunset they reached the hotel in the little hamlet of thatched huts, with a few more pretentious places, white-painted bungalows with green jalousies, and a single street of small shops.

## THE END OF THE RAINBOW

The proprietor met them at the door, a queer professorial person, wearing a long gray duster and a skull cap. He told them that he could let them have only three rooms, instead of the four he had promised.

"But we'd engaged the four," protested the Princess.

"Quite, Madam. But another party arrived from the north to-day, and what could I do. I had to give them shelter."

"Well, I daresay we can manage. It's only for a night," and the Princess, followed by Charles with the bags, was shown into the rooms, cool and large with windows reaching from floor to ceiling, protected as usual only by the latticed blinds.

Papa meanwhile seated himself on the veranda in a long wicker chair, commanding something long and cool to drink. The children, left free, set out to explore.

First they saw that Woof was made comfortable in a shed, where he sat and whined, then put the kitten and the parrot in a small room off the veranda indicated to them by a smiling black maid. Then they sauntered out into the street. Already the brief twilight was over, the stars shone and lights twinkled from the bungalows and

## ISLAND FARM

the shop windows, and here and there on the mountain slopes.

The street was full of people, brown or black, but no white folk. Tiny donkeys loaded high trotted before black men or women, who stalked along silently, dressed in dingy white, the men wearing battered wide straw hats, the women bandannas. Others squatted along the curb, eating out of baskets, murmuring in low voices or suddenly lifting them to call to some passer in the street. A spicy, warm wind rose and fell intermittently.

"It doesn't seem as if it were really us, seeing it all," Wendo remarked softly, as they regarded the unfamiliar scene. "More as if we were reading about other people."

"I'm going to write a poem about it," murmured Deedah dreamily. "I'm going to write lots of poems. And you must start painting again, Wendo."

"Yes. I've got all those new paints too that the Princess gave me on my birthday."

The boys and Treachy had joined Papa, who came down from the veranda, and who now called to the two that the evening meal was ready. They found the Princess and the Baby already at table, which was lit by tall candles, in a big and dusky

## THE END OF THE RAINBOW

room. It was a good dinner, with roast kid, baked yam, a curious but delicious stew of some new vegetable, and mountain berries with cream made out of green coconuts on them. And there was a tender salad of young palm leaves

They were all too tired and sleepy to talk much, and right after dinner they went to bed. Treachy was immensely pleased to find that she was to sleep on a trundle bed only six inches from the floor, that was rolled out from under the big bed where Wendo and Deedah were put.

“Jiminy, I wouldn’t mind falling out of this,” she said, for she had a habit of tossing herself out of her bed.

And the pioneers slept.

Before the dawn they were stirring, soon after that eating breakfast, and then the procession was away again. Just as they left the guests who had taken the extra room came out for their own meal. They turned out to be two young women, who told them they were touring the island. They were Americans, and it was so long since they had seen any Americans that everyone was quite stirred up. The Baby kissed them both good-by and offered to let them kiss her parrot, but they didn’t.

The two strangers stood waving to them as they

## ISLAND FARM

drove away, and they waved back, and Zack roared, "Hooray for America."

Then the final lap of the journey was on. Down they went for awhile, long sweeping curves through forest with glimpses of the sea and valleys full of waving green sugar cane. At noon they left the highroad, took a dirt road that climbed a mile or so and then, suddenly turning round a big clump of banana plants, opened on the house.

It was a wide-spreading, one-storey place, painted a sunny green with pale yellow trimmings. Behind it stood two tall royal palms, on one side a small plantation of orange and lemon trees, on the other a meadow dotted with other trees about the size of apples with a thin frondy leafage. Beyond, the hill stooped down giving a wonderful view of coast and sea far below.

"This," said Papa, as they all piled out and looked about them, half fascinated, half disturbed, for it was all so strange and new, and their forever-to-be-home, "this is the end of the rainbow. Now for the pot of gold."

"Gold!" They all echoed the word.

But he merely smiled in reply, and turning, took the Princess by the hand and led her up the steps and inside the bungalow, the children crowding close behind.

## CHAPTER VI

### EUREKA!

**A** BUSY time followed. Every one worked from morning to night, getting settled in the new home. There were hurried meals at all sorts of hours, ecstatic pauses for glimpses at the truly marvelous view, exclamations, appeals, summons, commands, and a great deal of laughter.

Mumsie and Papa with the sturdy help of Charles and the two boys, dragged the furniture into the chosen places, and it looked charming. There was a big living room, with an alcove that did for a dining room when they didn't eat on the broad veranda. The rugs they had brought looked perfectly delectable on the shining floor, newly polished by Sadie, and so did the big easy chairs, the bookshelves, a broad divan on which Mumsie heaped bright-colored cushions, and the tables, old ones that had belonged to ancestors in New England and a new one of mahogany found in the little seaport they had left. There were the pic-



## ISLAND FARM

tures to hang, one of the boys on a stepladder puffing and grunting, raising and lowering till they were just the height to suit the Princess, and the books to unpack and range in the shelves. Wendo and Deedah busied themselves doing that, remaining petrified in odd positions over some volume opened at hazard until they were yelled at and told to get ahead. Treachy was busy in the bedrooms hanging up clothes and arranging dressing tables, and the Baby was everywhere, being fallen over, walking off with something that was being looked for, generally a nuisance and as happy as a clam.

As for Papa, he was busy in the room at the end of the veranda that was to be his study. Here he sat all day arranging his papers and his books; his old desk and big chair and the rug that had been brought to him out of the west by Uncle Ned having already been placed. Enley was to make some special bookcases for him later, and he was drawing the plans for them.

"How about eats?" he would shout, suddenly appearing. And there would be a scurrying round, papers and excelsior cleared off the dining table, Sadie would run about laughing, and soon there would be eats. Cold roast kid, probably, stewed choyas, breadfruit, finger bananas,

## EUREKA

more delicious than any ever found in the north, stewed guavas, golden loquots, big squashy paw-paws. They had a new cook here, a very old negress who was gray as a badger and who cooked like a magician.

"Enley," said Papa, as they sat eating their dinner on the veranda, the third day, when almost everything was in order and it looked really homelike, with familiar things all about them again, "exactly what does *Eureka* mean?"

"It sounds like the name of a college," returned his son doubtfully.

"It is, the name of this place," replied Papa. "But I want to know its meaning."

The children all sat dumb.

"Lacking in the most ordinary intelligence and the rudiments of education," observed Papa sadly, to the Princess. "How, my dear, do you excuse the colossal ignorance of your offspring?"

But the Princess only laughed.

"Merely amuses you, eh? Well, *Eureka* means *I have found it!* Now do you see why we are calling this place *Eureka Pen?*"

"Because you found it," said Zack.

"Because, my boy, here is where the pot of gold is hidden and where it's up to us to find it

## ISLAND FARM

and our fortunes with it. All we have to do is *dig*."

"But why do you call it a pen?" asked Treachy. "Why not a typewriter?" and she laughed gleefully at her mirthful suggestion.

"More ignorance," said Papa. "Pen, my child, is the name given in this island to all country places in the hills. It has nothing to do with the implement for writing."

"But is there really gold here?" demanded Enley.

"Only such gold as we can bring out of the land by working," answered the Princess, rather gravely. "We have a big campaign ahead of us. I am getting a number of negroes to put the land in condition, and I have all the plans for our vegetable growing worked out on paper. You two boys will have a lot on your shoulders, and the girls too will have plenty to do, if we are going to make a success. You boys will have to attend to the plowing, for the negroes don't know how, and you'll have to do a lot of harrowing and cultivating and planting. I'm going to attend to the managing and planning of rotation of crops, and the marketing and shipping. I'm going to give you girls the housekeeping to do, a week each, turn and turn and turn about. You'll have to do

## EUREKA

the ordering, plan the meals, go to market, keep the store closets, all of it. Sadie and the cook will do the work under you. Papa is going to write, to help out while we are getting started. I think, with us all working together, we are sure to make a go of it."

They listened with serious faces. It sounded grown-up and splendid. Treachy, her eyes like saucers under the thatch of curly dark hair, said:

"Shall we make the beds?" in a most important voice, so that every one laughed, and Mumsie answered yes, they could each make their own beds, and save Sadie that.

And the very next day they began to put the program into effect.

The house stood on the top of a rounded hill, with spreading fields lower down, then a sharp drop, and more fields. The trees close about turned out to be allspice, and Papa asserted that here was another source of income. "How much do you pay for allspice in the States?" he asked the Princess, and when she told him ten cents for a small box, he pointed out that the trees were covered with the tiny brownish berries.

"There are millions of ounces on these trees," he said. "Figure it out for yourselves."

Charles showed them a beaten clay floor at one

## ISLAND FARM

side of the kitchen shed, and told them that was where the allspice was dried.

But when the Princess tried to get the crop picked, she found that none of the blacks would do it.

“Don’ like for to pick pimento berry,” was all they would say. And since the family were too busy to do the work, which would take long and arduous days, the allspice was left on the trees.

Deedah was a natural horsewoman, and the duty of driving down the mountain once a week for the necessary stores devolved upon her. What fun it was, getting up at dawn, and after a hurried breakfast starting down the long slope to the coast and the little town that snuggled there, a far smaller place than the one they had come from on the other side of the island. One or sometimes two of the other children went with her, usually one of the girls, for the boys were already deep in the gardening work. It was wonderful to watch the white trailing mists curl slowly up into the blue sky, revealing the piled mountains, dark and mysterious, the deep valleys, last of all the flashing sea, wonderful to arrive at the market place, all movement and color and chatter, pick out the week’s provisions, go on errands to the tiny shops, meet the white people

## EUREKA

and exchange greetings. There were few of these, and all were friendly.

Papa decided that they would have to build a cistern, for the only well was not very deep, and then he wanted to fix a shower for them to use as a bath.

So they got a mason up from the village, a dignified brown man who brought an assistant with him. He got the boys to help him too, and for ten days they strove with the red clay of the country, digging, mixing, mortaring, wallowing in the mud, till the thing was finished, and covered neatly with tarpaulin. Conduits led into it from the roof, and as there was a lot of roof it looked as though, when the rains came, there would soon be plenty of water.

"It rains a goodish bit up in these hills," said the mason, the job finished. "You'll have quite all the water you want."

They remembered that later.

Enley was busy part of the time building the shower room, and also making the bookcases for Papa's study. He was never so happy as when occupied with hammer and saw, building something. They would hear him singing in his extraordinary manner, without hint of tune but with plenty of rhythm, to the accompaniment of the



## ISLAND FARM

rat-a-tat of his hammer or the drone of his saw or rasp of his plane. Zack meanwhile set in a lot of banana plants and plantains, allied to the banana, but only to be eaten baked or fried, when they were delicious. As for the Princess, she was already starting a flower garden, tucked in between a wing of the house and the new cistern.

Slowly the work of clearing the ground for the serious planting went forward. The blacks were not to be pressed. They came when they liked, worked as long as they chose, knocking off constantly to rest in little groups, chewing sugar cane and murmuring their endless talk, or eating evil-smelling salt fish. Now and then one of them would come to ask for his pay. Once given, they saw no more of that particular worker.

"I never knew such lazy beggars," exclaimed Enley, disgusted. "Just as soon as you get one of them doing the way you want he clears out. And not one works steadily for a single hour."

"I think Mumsie'd better never pay them," suggested Treachy. "Then they'd have to stay."

It was the good old idea of peonage, though she didn't know it.

The plow came from America, and the negroes, including Charles, were deeply interested. They had never seen one before, and this particular

## EUREKA

plow was worth looking at; a grand steel and red-painted thing of the reversible type, the very latest in plows.

“How gwine work land with him?” they asked, touching it gingerly.

They shook their heads at Zack’s explanations.

“Him no good in dissa place,” they asserted briefly.

“We’ll show ’em,” promised Zack.

A week later, they did. One of the terraces was finally cleared, burnt over, stumps dug up and the larger stones removed. The morning the plowing was to begin started cool and fresh. Charles harnessed the bays, stout, gentle beasts, and led them to where the fine new tool lay waiting for its work. There was a large gallery of blacks gathered from the country round come to watch the operation.

“Hitch ’em to it, Charley,” commanded Zack, his hands caressing the handles lovingly. “Gosh, Enley, she’s sure one beauty!”

Enley, slightly embarrassed by the large audience, nodded. He was going to drive the pair while Zack handled the plow, for the horses had never done any field work, and might prove nervous at first.

## ISLAND FARM

Charles, simply bursting with importance, hitched up and handed Enley the lines, while Zack set the share at the point where he wished to begin.

"Giddap," clucked Enley.

The pair started calmly, felt the sudden pull as the share dug into the ground, stopped, and then made a wild plunge forward. They stopped again, trembling. A faint murmur came from the watching negroes.

"Get along," Enley flapped the reins, Zack braced himself, Charles, looking anxious, went to the head of Ada and grabbed her bridle. The gallery, breathing deeply, gathered closer.

Pete started, Ada held back. There was confusion, scuffling, a tangled stamping of feet, Charles seen snatching at the air, Ada having jerked her head free. Enley brought the lines down smartly on the backs of the team, but still the two worked with a divided mind. When one started, the other balked. Sweat burst out on them, they snorted.

Suddenly they both got going together, moving in a queer bunched sort of lope, tossing their heads. Charles hung on, so did Enley, but the speed increased, the plowshare lost its bite, bounding over the surface, wrenching the handles from

## EUREKA

Zack's grip. There were yells of "Whoa, whoa" there," and Charles, his eyes fairly popping from his head, exclaimed in a smothered voice:

"Law sakes, the devil he get into these yere horses!"

The plowshare caught in a rock at the moment when Enley, digging his heels in, managed to swing the pair round and bring them to a standstill, broadside on. Zack quickly looked the tool over and found it, miraculously, unharmed.

The negroes had followed closely, staring, silent, wondering. Perhaps this was the way the thing was expected to work?

It was a morning of mad and frantic toil, but at last the boys and Charles conquered. The plow began to show results; by fits and jerks the team learned what was expected, and gave up moving in a series of plunges. The plowed part was wavy, uneven, with patches untouched, but with each turn the work improved.

By noon the boys were exhausted, and so were Ada and Pete. Charles had recovered his air of superiority, ordered the other blacks about, took turns with Enley at driving, while Enley spelled Zack at the plow.

"Gee whiz," muttered Zack, mopping his scarlet face, "if we're going to have to work like this

## ISLAND FARM

over the rest of the land we'll never get our planting done. Never been so hot in my life! Maybe these niggers are right; not much sense working harder with a plow than a spade."

"The worst of it's over, I guess," said Enley. "Though this is the most level piece there is."

"What for buckra want to dig land with horse?" asked one of the onlookers, addressing Charles. But Charles took no notice.

Papa and Mumsie and the girls, even Baby, had by now arrived on the scene to see how the work was progressing.

"Looks more like a field of battle than a patch for potatoes," Papa commented.

"You poor lambs," said the Princess, "has it been an awful job?"

"Golly, but you certainly are red in the face," Wendo remarked. "What's been the matter, anyhow?"

Zack and Enley exchanged a glance, then burst into laughter. Matter, indeed? What hadn't been the matter! Rocks buried out of sight, idiot horses, a blazing sun, soil like stone in parts and almost mud in other places, weariness, rage, and a horde of observers in close proximity. They roared.

So did Papa and the Princess and the girls and

## EUREKA

the Baby, while the staring blacks, including Charles, looked on amazed. What were the buckra people laughing at?

The buckra did not explain, but moved off together, still giggling, listening to the boys' descriptions of the morning's show and commenting freely on their personal appearance, stained with the red clay of the land, streaked with sweat, a torn sleeve depending from Zack's shirt, Enley's hat, stepped on by Ada in a moment of frenzied prancing, flattened like a pancake.

"Go and get a shower and cool off before you eat, boys," said the Princess as they reached the house. "Maybe we'd better let them dig, as they've always done, and not try to do any more plowing."

But neither of the boys would agree to that. No, they'd got over the worst part this morning, and the horses were learning, and it was a dandy plow. They could go on all right.

In good time they proved it, and Ada and Pete grew into excellent plowhorses, while the straight furrows and even depth of the plowing witnessed to the fact that neither Zack nor Enley had forgotten the lessons of Makeshift Farm. The blacks were convinced, and now and then one of them would come to beg to have the loan of the



## ISLAND FARM

“horse spade,” as they called it. But Charles would not permit this.

“You go work yo’ land your ownself, black man,” he’d tell the beggar. “Thissa plow, him for white use only, him work only for the buckra.”

## CHAPTER VII

### BUSY DAYS

**T**HE months ran along and the boys dug steadily for the pot of gold. Zack would roar after Enley in the early morning, "Come along, let's get after that pot," and the two of them, with such of the blacks as could be persuaded to work, toiled among the sprouting rows of growing things. Rains had begun. As soon as the earth got wet it turned to a sticky red clay that was like paste and paint mixed. The boys looked more like roots than human beings after a morning of work. But results were showing.

"Things are looking fine," the Princess said, walking with her sons along the orderly rows of young vegetables. "We ought to start shipping in a couple of weeks, and I can't understand why Cousin Frank doesn't let me hear from him. It'll be an awful shame if these delicious young beets and squashes and summer cabbages go to waste. I've cabled him, and perhaps he'll get busy.

## ISLAND FARM

Don't the artichokes need cultivating before they grow too big and spready?"

"Yeah, we'll do 'em to-morrow," said Zack. "You know what, Mum, Cousin Frank's always been that way. Lot of talk and not much do . . . cauliflower, rhubarb and sweet potatoes and lettuce and carrots 'll all be ready this month. String beans and peas won't stand shipping, I guess.

"Maybe not. How about the potatoes?"

They sauntered over to the potato field and stood looking at the sturdy plants, just coming to flower. It was really a fine sight, and the boys deserved credit. A couple of negroes were putting in pineapple plants in the patch below, and Zack pointed to them:

"Look at 'em. Talk about working like a nigger! Ever see anything move as slow in your born life? Gee, if we didn't work any better than a nigger, guess there'd be darned little work done."

The Princess sighed. The labor problem was proving difficult, and she was worried. The boys, even if the girls helped, couldn't handle the growing vegetables, the reaping, packing, and shipping, without a lot of help. And more and more

## BUSY DAYS

she began to fear that it might be very hard to get that help.

She went back to the house. As she neared it the Baby came flying toward her, wailing inarticulately, tears streaming down her cheeks.

"Oh, what *is* the matter, lamb? Has anything stung you?"

"It's Polly," sobbed the Baby. "She's flown away, she's climbing and shrieking, Mumsie, she won't come back to me, my precious little Polly. . . ." she became incomprehensible.

"Hush, child. We'll get her back for you. *Deedah!*" called the Princess.

Deedah appeared round the corner of the house, wearing a pair of overalls. She seemed to be excited, and was coming at a run:

"Look," she cried, hurrying toward her mother. "I was helping Charles tick the horses and heard a squeak and found this tiny young mongoose. . . ."

Then she became conscious of the Baby's tearfulness and paused long enough to listen to Mumsie. But the Baby, seeing the small animal in her hands, forgot the parrot in the new interest. Distractedly Mumsie fixed her eyes on the fierce-looking, furry creature, meanwhile exclaiming:

"The parrot's got loose, Dee. Where did you

## ISLAND FARM

get that horrid thing? And I do wish you wouldn't go round in those overalls, and ticking the horses isn't a job for a girl."

But Deedah and the Baby were in raptures over the baby mongoose, and so were Treachy and Wendo who appeared from nowhere, attracted by the sound of voices.

"Mumsie, it's a *heavenly* little beast," declared Deedah. "My goodness, if I didn't help tick the horses they'd be eaten up! Charles has about a million things to do everyday, and he can't get that lazy Bill to do one single thing. *Isn't* it sweet, Treachy? See how it tries to bite! I'm going to get Enley to make a cage and we'll tame it. All right, Bab, we'll get that Poll back."

"We'll have to catch snakes to feed it," declared Wendo, rapturously regarding the mongoose, that did indeed try its best to twist round and bite Deedah. "Yes, Mumsie," she added hurriedly, seeing a question trembling on her mother's lips, "I have made the beds, and Sadie said she was going to dust the living room, because she had to get the floor oiled and didn't want me round."

A howl from Treachy summoned the boys, who regarded the capture with delight. Enley took it gingerly out of Deedah's clutch, and bore it off

## BUSY DAYS

to put it in his room while he fashioned a cage for it. Mumsie bade the rest come to the rescue of the parrot. They found the bird climbing eagerly among the thorny branches of a small orange tree, her red eyes gleaming in wicked triumph, a raucous yell coming from her at intervals.

The Baby burst into new sobs at the sight.

"I'll put her cage under the tree, with a banana in it," suggested Zack, "and she'll come down when she gets hungry." He proceeded to carry out his idea. The Baby watched him doubtfully, still faintly sobbing. Polly watched them too, and when the cage was in place rapidly climbed higher, as though to demonstrate that never again would she submit to captivity. Hearing the storm of talk, Papa came out and asked what was the matter.

"Get me the fish net," he told Zack, who ran to get the long-handled landing net, and gave it to his father.

Amid the breathless attention of the rest Papa fished for Polly. The bird seemed interested, studied the approaching net, gurgled at it thoughtfully. Cunningly Papa worked it through the branches till he had it over her, and then with a clever jerk he scooped her into it and brought her down, a startled, furious bird that shrieked



## ISLAND FARM

with rage, bit, ruffled her feathers and clutched the meshes with her stout claws. But Papa dumped her into the cage, shook her free and shut the door on her. The Baby whooped and danced, crying, "Fishbird, fishbird, poor Polly, you're a fish." Polly, sulking, made no comment, and they left her to recover her temper and eat her banana.

Lessons had started in earnest, and two hours in the morning were given to French and mathematics with the Princess, two in the afternoon under Papa with Latin, history and geography. The days were busy, for what with the work on the vegetables, the house, the studying and reciting, as Wendo said there was only time left to eat and sleep. The girls fretted at not being allowed to do more of the outside work. But the Princess told them it wouldn't do.

"It isn't like Makeshift Farm, dears. The blacks wouldn't understand it if you were to hoe and plant and harness the horses and that sort of thing. You've got quite enough to do in the house, as it is."

"That's just it, Mumsie! We don't want to do just girl things all the time," Deedah protested. "Life's too short."

Mumsie laughed. "It is, is it? But you *are* girls, aren't you?"

## BUSY DAYS

Of course no one could deny that, and Deedah had to grin an acknowledgment. But she and Treachy both made excuses whenever the chance occurred to slip into overalls and do odd jobs, like going in search of young banana plants in the hills about, and adding them to the fine plantation Zack had started, off to the south of the house, or, as Deedah had done when she found the baby mongoose, helping to tick the horses. Wendo didn't mind. She would rather curl up over a book on the veranda, or dream over a sketch than do any sort of work, in or out of the house, and was frank to say so.

"I'm glad I'm a painter," she remarked cheerfully. "You can sit still and look at things, and every one lets you alone if you are painting." And Deedah accused her of taking advantage of this fact to sit and look and never paint at all.

"You just use it for an alibi," she declared, proud of the word, which she had run across lately. To be sure, she pronounced it *aleeby*, to the wild joy of Papa when he first heard her, but it was a good word, for all that.

Papa was giving a good deal of his time to decorating his study. He sat on a stepladder and painted a wonderful frieze round the top of the walls, all bright-colored fruits and flowers with

## ISLAND FARM

birds and butterflies hanging over them. The Baby liked to watch him, and to mess about with the paints and come away with streaks of green or red or yellow or all of them on her face, so that she looked like a walking rainbow, and made any one who saw her howl with amusement. Papa told her that he thought he'd stick her up as part of the decoration if she got more on her but she only chuckled at him.

"Tell you what, Princess," Papa would say, "I've missed my vocation. I ought to have been an interior decorator. If the farm fails we'll go back to New York and I'll open a studio."

"Oh, but the farm won't fail, dear," said the Princess quickly.

"Then the world will lose a great artist," laughed Papa, and went back to his painting.

An answer came at last from Cousin Frank, who said that he had found a commission man who promised to handle whatever arrived and to ship as soon as possible. So Mumsie made arrangements at once for the negroes who were to do the harvesting to come. And then it started raining. Really raining! Torrents, that came in sheets of wet from the low gray sky, straight, steady, unrelenting. It kept it up for three whole

## BUSY DAYS

days. Not a single black would work, and it was hopeless for the boys to try to do the work alone.

"Everything'll rot in the ground, Enley," said Zack. "Gosh all hemlock, after the way we've sweated over the blamed stuff! Doesn't it make you sick?"

Enley nodded.

"You know what," he answered, after a pause. "If we ever do get money for all this stuff, I'm goin' to save every cent of my share, and when I've got enough, I'm goin' back to the good old U. S. A."

"That's what I want, too," agreed Zack. "But suppose we don't get any money?"

"Then," said his brother slowly, "I'm going to run away to sea and get home that way."

"Gee, you've got it all figgered out, haven't you?"

Again Enley nodded, looking afar off. "This place doesn't seem to want you," he explained. "It—it sort of *lurks* at you." Enley wasn't quite sure of what lurks meant, but the sound of the word expressed what he felt about this tropic island. From that moment, unbeknownst to their father and mother, the five older children shared a growing determination to get back to America. The violence of the rain, that made it utterly im-

## ISLAND FARM

possible to go outside, and the fact, as Wendo pointed out, that there was always something about that might bite or sting, disturbed them.

“At home,” remarked Treachy, as the five sat huddled in a corner of the veranda where the downpour couldn’t reach them, “everything liked us, but here . . . only this morning there was a centipede in my shoe when I shook it that I had to squash. And we can’t roll in the grass here. . . .”

“And when I’m trying to paint I have to keep an eye out all the time for some horrid bug or thing,” interrupted Wendo. “Of course it’s ever so beautiful, but it’s beautiful in America too.”

“You bet,” was the hearty response from four throats. And Enley, yielding to an overpowering impulse, burst forth into song, an extempore song of praise and longing in which the phrase “Our good old U. S. A.” recurred frequently. A call from Mumsie halted him:

“For goodness sake, Enley, stop that dreadful sound,” was what she said.

“I wonder why she doesn’t like our singing,” mused Treachy. “We love to hear her.”

“It’s this business of not being on a key,” Deedah returned, “whatever a key is. I like Enley’s singing, myself. It’s so sort of wailing and loud.”

## BUSY DAYS

But Enley, discouraged, had disappeared.

On the first day after the rain every one turned to to help harvest the crop of vegetables that were to go in the first shipment. Eight negroes came, and with Charles and the two boys in the fields, brought in the barrow loads of succulent green and red and yellow bunches, while Papa and Mumsie and the three girls, with Sadie, packed the stuff in the crates and barrels. While they were all busy working the sound of wheels, and then the mournful jangle of the bell that hung in the front veranda startled them. Sadie went to see who it was and came back with the information that a Mr. Brannon-Simmit had come to call.

“Well,” the Princess looked desperately round at the disheveled crew of girls and at her own earth-stained hands, “there’s nothing to do but ask him to come round here, Sadie. He’ll have to excuse us.”

A tall, thin, hawk-faced man appeared, with a sensitive, agreeable expression.

“You’ll have to excuse us, Mr. . . . ah?” began the Princess.

“Brandon-Smith,” returned the stranger, smiling. “It’s very kind of you to let me come in. I’m by way of being your neighbor, at least I think we are the only two white families within



## ISLAND FARM

eight miles, and I thought it wouldn't be presumptuous to drop over and say how-do-you-do "

"You find us hard at work getting off a shipment of vegetables for New York," the Princess explained, "and if you don't mind sitting here and looking on, we'll be delighted to have an audience."

So the caller, first protesting that he wanted to assist in the business, sat down and chatted, for he was told that it was too hard to teach him how to go about packing vegetables:

"I've just got the girls to doing it properly, and my husband to doing it badly, and I don't want to begin again," laughed the Princess. "You talk to us and tell us about this island of yours."

So he talked, and then tea time came and they all adjourned to the front veranda and Sadie brought out tea, with little sandwiches of bread and guava paste, and a chocolate cake, and small fluffy biscuits with butter. Mr. Brandon-Smith remarked on these:

"Rather delicious, aren't they!" he said, in his curious voice, on which the children commented later. "American, what?"

"Have you been there?" asked the Princess.

He shook his head. "No. No, I've been buried in this awful place for years. I've a little girl, by

## BUSY DAYS

the way, and I do wish you'd bring your daughters to my pen some afternoon. She's such a lonely little thing. Not a single white child for her to play with—only these voodoo-driven blacks . . .” his voice trailed off, and his eyes looked gloomy.

“You aren't keen about this part of the world?” Papa inquired.

“It's no place for white people—er, that is, perhaps you don't feel that way?” and he looked thoughtfully at Papa.

“We all like the place. When you think that right now they are sloshing about in sleet and snow, and living in heated rooms back there . . . well, give me this,” and Papa waved a slow arm that embraced the exquisite, glowing view, the purple hills down-sloping to the far turquoise of the sea that stood up like a wall, dim and hazy, the bowing palms with their silver-singing leaves like the patter of rain, the thick, vivid foliage of the crowding trees.

“Ah, yes, quite,” answered Mr. Brandon-Smith. And presently after he departed, begging the Princess to bring one or two of the girls soon to meet his Alice. And she promised it would be within the next few days.

## ISLAND FARM

Left to themselves the children discussed the visitor.

"He's got such a sad face," said romantic Deedah. "Maybe his lovely young wife was drowned or something, and he's mourning for her all his life."

"Wonder why the deuce he stays here if he doesn't like it," remarked Zack. "Gee, if I were a man I'd go where I wanted to."

"Yes, he said this wasn't any place for a white man," agreed Wendo, but Treachy observed:

"He's not so very white. His face is sort of yellow, like his hair. Wonder what Alice is like?"

"Wish she were boy," put in Zack. "'Nough girls here already."

They shouted at him.

"He talks funny," decided Enley, when the uproar subsided. "Sort of up and down, like a kind of singing."

"It must be hard to talk like that," thought Treachy. And, Mumsie coming to the door at that moment, she demanded:

"Why does that man talk that funny way?"

"If by 'that man' you mean Mr. Brandon-Smith, it's what's known as the Oxford accent," answered Mumsie. "I wish you'd find Charles and tell him I want him."

## BUSY DAYS

“He’s nice, anyhow,” declared Enley, as the gang scattered.

Later they discussed Papa’s remark that they all liked the island.

“It’s different for Pops and Mumsie, ’cause they’re so old,” explained Deedah. “They don’t care about making snow men and skating and coasting, for one thing, so winter’s nothing to them.”

“It’s a good sort of adventure to come here, all the same,” Wendo said. “There’s that pet mon-goose you caught, Dee. Wouldn’t have done that at home.”

“I know. . . . It was great coming here, if we don’t stay forever.”

Enley burst forth with sudden passion:

“There’s only one place to live, and that’s the good old U. S. A.”

Charles, hearing them, grew curious about this distant land of which they spoke. They told him it was a thousand and more times as big as this island of his.

“How you keep from gettin’ los’?” he wanted to know.

“Because we’re so darned smart,” answered Zack. “There’s millions and millions of persons in America, and none of ’em get lost. Of course,

## ISLAND FARM

the names of our places are written up over the railway stations."

But Charles knew nothing of railways. Indeed, it was hard work explaining America to him. Take snow, now. When they told him that at this season Makeshift Farm was simply buried under snow, cold, soft white stuff that fell out of the sky, and that you could walk over the water, ponds, and rivers, as if it were ground, he just goggled.

"Black man live on your island?" he asked, awed.

"Sure, lots. But it's not an island."

No, Charles couldn't understand. He knew about witches and duppies and spells, but simple things like railways, subways, skyscrapers, ice, snow, such things were beyond him.

"I go some day, see for myse'f."

"You can come with us. Maybe we'll work our way back on a ship, and you can too."

"All right, young buckra."

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE LONELY LITTLE GIRL

PAPA and Zack went down with Charles early the following morning, the crates and barrels stacked behind in the big wagon, and the first shipment went off. Zack went along in order to learn the procedure, for after this the two boys would see to the shipping. There ought to be a shipment once a week.

They got home just in time for tea, rather tired, but happy.

"It did look great to see our things roll into the hold," Zack told his brothers and sisters. "So exciting. The Captain said he couldn't say how they'd stand the voyage, but he guessed they'd arrive, anyhow. He looked like a nice man. P'raps we might stow away on his ship if we decide to run away." This to Enley, in a whisper.

Papa reported that it would be ten days before another sailing, to the Princess' annoyance, for the oftener they could ship the better. But there was nothing to be done about it.



## ISLAND FARM

A few days later Mumsie decided to return Mr. Brandon-Smith's call. Papa, who hated driving, refused to go, and she took Wendo and the Baby. Wendo as a reward for not having been late in her tasks for a whole week, and the Baby because she usually went with the Princess if possible. It was a long, hard, uphill drive to Lost Pen, which crowned a high hill, and the Princess said she certainly wouldn't come often. Mr. Brandon-Smith was on the veranda and seemed very glad to see them.

Beside him was a slender little girl in a white dress with a pink sash round her middle and a pink bow tying back her very pale blond hair. Her face was pale, too, small, but she had dark eyes, that gave it an unexpected beauty, a touch of something wistful and grave.

The house was attractive, old, wide-spreading, with stucco walls tinted faint hues of bluish gray and rose that mingled together much like the shades in an evening sky. It was overgrown in large part with vines, *stephanotis*, *bougainvillæa* and others less familiar, and orange trees and lime bushes crowded close to it, with tall palms behind it. When they had reached the veranda they saw that all the rooms opened on it, and through them they saw the lights and shadows of

## THE LONELY LITTLE GIRL

198324

a patio that made the central portion of the building.

Mr. Brandon-Smith was welcoming his guests in his soft, curiously modulated voice, to which Wendo at least listened with intense interest.

"It's charming of you to come. I do hope the road didn't prove to be too much of a bad business; gettin' up here is a bit difficult, but once you're up," and he waved a hand at the view, magnificent indeed, overlooking the scene of tumbled hills in all directions, with far glimpses of the ocean and the distant, highest central peaks that climbed to very heaven, bare and splendid. "This is my daughter Alice, and it's so long since she saw a white child that I don't really think she believes you're real, you know. Eh, Allie?"

"Oh, yes," returned Alice, in a shy voice, flushing with the words.

"Do you like to live up here?" asked Wendo, while the Baby, as if this were some joke, gurgled a delighted laugh.

"I've always lived here," said Alice. "At least, I came here when I was so little that I don't remember anything else."

"Where did you come from?" As they talked, the three young people had drifted away from their elders, sauntering slowly down the broad

## ISLAND FARM

veranda toward an arched entrance beyond that appeared to open on a garden.

"From Home," answered Alice, in a surprised voice.

"Do you mean England?"

"Of course. Oh, I do wish I could go back there, and be an English girl!" A world of longing spoke in the tones of her voice.

"Maybe you will some day," said Wendo comfortingly. "I guess we usually always get what we want ever and ever so much."

"Do you? How perfectly splendid."

Wendo nodded. "I have," she declared.

"I have too," added the Baby, without much notion of what they were talking about.

Alice laughed. "Come along and see my pets. I've got such a lot."

They went through the arch, and found it was not a garden, but a court planted with a few shrubs, and almost full of cages, runways, small houses, each of which had its tame animal or bird in it. There was a chicken house with a flock of tiny bantams, a white owl in a dark boxlike house of its own set in the crotch of a tree, a whole cageful of darling white mice with red eyes, rabbits with loppity ears. And all were tame, and the children handled them with squeaks of pleasure,

## THE LONELY LITTLE GIRL

the rabbits eating lettuce from their hands, the mice running up their arms. The Baby's eyes opened very wide at that, she held herself very stiff, not sure whether she was frightened or not. There were canaries too, and a mongoose, curled up in a corner of its small home. Wendo told of their own young mongoose.

"I've got a Shetland pony in the stables, and two cats, and three dogs," Alice told them. "Maybe sometime you'll ride on the pony," she said to the Baby. "He's too small for me now, I ride a sorrel Papa gave me last birthday. That mongoose we took away from some negroes who were going to set fire to it. You know they think the mongoose are evil spirits, and when they catch one they soak it in kerosene and let it run off all blazing. Horrible! And this one was already soaked when Papa came past and made them give it up. He had to hit one of the men with his riding crop, and threaten them with the constabulary before he could get it. He's made the blacks angry very often, and he says they'd like nothing better than to get back at him."

"Isn't he afraid they might kill him?" Wendo's eyes shone with the thrill of this possibility.

"He thinks they might try, but he isn't afraid,

## ISLAND FARM

I'm very sure," answered Alice, in her neat, precise way.

"Were you named out of *Alice in Wonderland*?" Wendo wished to know. The three were seated on a narrow bench, each holding a rabbit, and looking at the curled up mongoose.

"No . . . but don't you dote on that book?" there was a decided thrill of interest in their new friend's voice.

"It's a perfectly wonderful book," Wendo asserted. And eagerly they began to talk of their favorite literature, of d'Artagnan in *The Three Musketeers*, of *Coral Island*, of *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea*. Alice had read them all, and many others. How exciting it was!

The Baby, neglected, entered the conversation with the information that she had a green parrot.

"It's called Polly, and it has red eyes and it says hell ever so often, because sailors had it once," she recounted hastily. "And it got away and Papa caught it with the fish net."

On went the eager chatter, till a maid came to tell them tea was being served and that they were to join Mr. Brandon-Smith and the Princess. They found the two seated near a table fairly loaded with delicious eats, and besides the tea a big jug of sparkling pale-yellow lemonade with all

## THE LONELY LITTLE GIRL

kinds of fruits in it. There were egg sandwiches, the egg all chopped fine and laid on a tiny lettuce leaf between thin slices of buttered bread, and guava paste sandwiches, and crisp toast, and there were three kinds of cake. After tea they went out to play, and ran races on the long path under an arbor of passion flower and jasmine, the Baby hastening along in the rear with shrieks of excitement. Wendo won, but as she explained, she had lots of practice at home. And they played hide and seek, with delightful places to hide in, for there were many buildings scattered over the enclosure in which the house was built, some very old and in ruins, and there were thick arbors and tiny summerhouses. How they laughed, how they shouted, and how sorry they were when the maid rounded them up again to tell them the Princess was going home. Flushed and breathless they came racing to the veranda, Alice rosy enough now, her yellow hair all flying and tumbled.

“Well, you’ve made friends, haven’t you,” said her father, smiling. “Your little girls have made a child of her in a couple of hours,” he added, turning to the Princess, “a thing I’ve never yet managed.”

“Poor mite,” said the Princess. “She needs other children. Couldn’t you let her come and

## ISLAND FARM

stay a couple of weeks with us? It would do her good and make us happy."

"Oh, could I?" Alice clasped her hands together with an eager, tense gesture, her eyes bright at the prospect. "Do you think you could possibly get along without me?"

Mr. Brandon-Smith laughed.

"It will be difficult, but I shouldn't mind trying," he said.

The three children hopped up and down, laughing. "What fun we'll have," declared Wendo. "You wait till you get there! And I've got some new books that Papa gave me for my birthday, and we'll read them, and play hide and seek and other things, and we'll show you how to dance Indian dances and everything."

Then they said good-by, having arranged that Mr. Brandon-Smith should bring Alice the following week for a good long visit, and drove away down the breakneck hill, waving back to their hosts, who stood on the steps and waved too until the trees hid them.

"Isn't it funny how you seem to have known some people ever and ever so long the very first time you see them?" said Wendo to Mumsie, as they settled down for the drive back. "I feel as if we'd always known Alice. She's a lovely little



## THE LONELY LITTLE GIRL

girl, and I just love her," and Wendo's voice was warm with conviction.

"I love her too," observed the Baby, "and she said she'd let me ride her little Shetwood pony."

"What sort of pony?" asked Mumsie.

"She means Shetland. She's ever so nice, I mean Alice, Mumsie, though she's terribly good, of course."

"How do you know she's terribly good?"

"Well, you can tell. She does nice things all day long, you know, and takes care of her father and the servants and all that, and practically never plays or makes a noise. She told us how she didn't. Jiminy, it must be awful to be an only child!"

"Why is she?" demanded the Baby.

But no one knew the answer to that.

They got back just before dinner, and round the table they told about the visit.

"He didn't speak of his wife, and I imagine she died before he brought Alice here," said the Princess. "I don't quite know why, but I feel as if there were some sort of mystery about that man. Here he is, an Oxford graduate, a man of culture, evidently having means, living marooned on a hill-top, without any plausible reason for being there.

## ISLAND FARM

It's none of my business, certainly, but one can't help wondering."

"The man's probably a criminal and has had to beat it from England with a price on his head," suggested Papa, in a pleased voice. "He looks rather like a murderer, I think."

"Pop, he does not," roared Wendo, who had taken a great fancy to the tall Englishman. "He looks good and as if he wanted people to like him."

"It may have been a moment's irritation," returned Papa. "I don't mean that he makes a habit of murder."

Wendo laughed, it was so funny to think of Mr. Brandon-Smith, with his nice gentle blue eyes, his thin, kind face, his hawk nose and slightly stooping shoulders, making a habit of murder.

"Anyhow, Alice is coming on Saturday to stay here. Maybe you think she's sort of murderous too?" There was scorn in Wendo's voice.

Papa shook his head.

"I doubt her knowing anything of her father's evil ways. English children are kept very much in their place. But of course the tendency *might* be inherited."

"Shucks," said Wendo.

Deedah and Treachy had driven to town with

## THE LONELY LITTLE GIRL

the other team that day, and had something to tell themselves.

“As we were coming along past that little bunch of nigger cabins at the foot of the second hill,” Deedah narrated, “we saw a lot of blacks collected in the field with a silkcotton tree in the middle. They were squatting down in a big circle, and under the tree was that old obeah woman that caught kitty and that knows duppie stories. She was kind of screeching at them, and waving her skinny arms, and when she saw us she stopped. She knew us, I guess, for she called out something, but I couldn’t get it, and we went on without stopping. There’s something scary about her, Papa.”

“She’s probably dangerous enough to her own people,” Papa answered gravely, “but the blacks don’t try any funny business here with the whites. There hasn’t been a single case of an attack on a white person by a negro in this island for at least a dozen years.” He was speaking more to the Princess than to the children, for it was easy to see that Deedah’s news had made Mumsie anxious.

“Yes,” she said slowly, “I know, but I do hate this voodoo or obeah or whatever they call it stuff. It’s so uncanny and savage.”

## ISLAND FARM

“It’s all of that, but then these blacks are uncanny and savage. But they’ve been doing this sort of thing right along, without troubling the white population, so I don’t think we need worry.”

“Charles says she puts bad spells on people for money,” contributed Enley. “He says it costs five pounds to have some one killed by her, they just wither up and die, and it takes three pounds just to have them go blind or be ill.”

“Charles is an idiot,” from Zack.

“I wonder why she’s in this neighborhood?” went on the Princess.

“Maybe she’s going to put a kill spell on Mr. Brandon-Smith,” suggested Wendo. “Alice said the niggers wanted to kill him.”

“Good heavens, Wendo, don’t say such awful things,” cried the Princess. “There’s been altogether too much talk of killing and voodoo, anyhow. Suppose we change the subject.”

So they talked about other things, but afterwards the boys and girls, sauntering down to the bars of the little enclosure where the horses were brought each morning and evening to be ticked, which, it might be explained, consisted in going over them carefully and ridding them of the pests, a huge tick that soon made great sores if not re-

## THE LONELY LITTLE GIRL

moved, and that actually ate the ears off the poor little donkeys belonging to the negroes, who neglected them shamefully, resumed the conversation as they hung over the bars and watched Charles.

“Did Alice really say the niggers wanted to kill her father?” demanded Zack.

Wendo told what had been said. “Alice says he’s made them stop doing a lot of bad things they like to do, and it makes them mad. And Alice said he had had an obeah mark against him already.”

“Gosh! Was he scared?”

“Nope. She says he’s never scared. But she’s rather scared.”

“I should think she’d be fearfully lonely up on top of that hill all by herself without any other children,” said Treachy. “Maybe Mumsie could adopt her, and then she could stay with us all the time, and have us for brothers and sisters.”

“Wouldn’t that be splendid!” exclaimed Deedah. “She’s really ever so nice, isn’t she, Wendo?”

“You bet she is. She could have the little room that isn’t used, close to Treachy and me. The sewing machine’s in it now, but it could come out.” Wendo was all excitement.

“How old is she?” asked Deedah.

## ISLAND FARM

"She's three months younger than me. Oh, wouldn't it be fine!"

Eager and thrilling, the whole bunch hastened off to find the Princess and propose the idea to her.

"Wouldn't you *love* to have her for another little girl of yours?" demanded Deedah.

"But don't you think it might be a trifle hard on her father?" the Princess wanted to know, looking at them thoughtfully.

They paused at that.

"Well, maybe he will get killed," said Enley. "We wouldn't be specially surprised."

"Oh, you wouldn't! Suppose, anyhow, that we wait a bit before suggesting it to them. Let's see how this visit turns out first."

Later that night after they'd gone to bed, the girls, who slept in two adjoining rooms, Deedah in one and her sisters in the other, heard Papa and Mumsie laughing together, and talking in low voices. Suddenly Papa exclaimed, so loudly that they heard the words:

"Why not adopt them both? I'm sure he looks like a wandering orphan, if ever there was one."

"Hush," murmured Mumsie, chuckling, and said something else they couldn't hear, and then Papa laughed again.

## THE LONELY LITTLE GIRL

Deedah slipped into the next room.

“Did you hear?” she asked in a sepulchral whisper.

“Yep. They don’t sound serious about it, but I guess maybe they’re thinking it over,” returned Treachy. “And that’s something.”



## CHAPTER IX

### DIFFERENT ADVENTURES

**W**ILD pigs from the hills had been breaking into the cabbage patch and creating damage. The boys were frantic about it, for they had put a lot of work into that bit of ground. They began to lie in wait, Zack especially eager, with a ready rifle in his hands, and take pot shots at the marauders. There was a thick clump of plantains in one corner of the field, and here Zack would ambush himself by the hour. Now and then he got a porker, to his and Enley's great delight, and the good of the larder. The pigs were queer little black creatures, thin as laths, and Papa declared he was sure they were merely overgrown rats. In spite of which they made excellent eating, and he did his share when they came to the table.

The day before the coming visit of the lonely little girl from Lost Pen, Zack crept off to await a possible shot. It was near sunset, that being the time the pigs were most likely to put in an appear-

## DIFFERENT ADVENTURES

ance. Zack told Enley he'd seen a specially big one the night before, and hoped it might return. "Didn't have the gun along, it's always that way," he explained. Enley was writing to the Old Hunter, their beloved Uncle Ned, and said he'd not seal up the letter till Zack had had his try. "Maybe I can tell him you got it."

Uncle Ned was now in far-off Arizona, but Enley was telling him of their decision to get back to America.

"I've told him about that sailor you know, and that probably we'll see him again, and perhaps go off with him to America. Lots of boys run away to sea. And then, if we do, that we'd come out to him in Arizona and be cowboys or trappers or something like that."

Zack nodded.

"Of course, we can't go till they get a manager, but I certainly do want to get away. Well, so long."

Enley resumed his letter, to be interrupted again by Treachy and the Baby, who stole round the corner fairly oozing excitement.

"Enley, come and see. There's a terrible fight goin' on between a big mongoose and a Johnnie-crow. Quick."

Enley wasted no time, and in a jiffy the three

## ISLAND FARM

came in sight of the two contesting creatures. They did not need to hide their approach, for both bird and beast were so involved in the deadly conflict they had no eyes for anything but each other.

The Johnniecrow is a large black vulture, scavenger of the island, with a fine payable for killing one. The mongoose, brought years ago from India to kill the rats that were ruining the sugar plantations, had spread all over and proved a bane rather than a blessing. To be sure, they had exterminated the rats, but with them went almost all the ground-nesting birds and many other varieties, together with small animals. Quick and fierce as are all the weasel family, the mongoose never hesitated to attack anything except man that came within its reach.

Evidently this mongoose had sprung upon the big bird as it lighted on the ground. When the children came into sight again, the two fighters were rolling in the red dust, the heavy wings of the vulture beating madly, its hooked beak striking viciously, while the mongoose, its jaws clamped about one of the bird's legs, hung on grimly.

Breathlessly the three stood looking on, close enough to get the fetid odor from the vulture's body. The Baby shook her head disgustedly, and

## DIFFERENT ADVENTURES

Treachy sniffed with distaste. The ball of fur and feathers thrashed about furiously, and they could plainly see the mongoose, releasing its hold suddenly, creep higher among the dusky feathers. The bird got its beak into the back of the weasel, however, but its wings were beating more feebly. Suddenly the mongoose shook itself free, drew back, turned its wicked eyes on the children and made off toward the brush, moving with difficulty, evidently badly wounded. The huge bird gave a croaking cry, flapped its wings slowly, lifting itself partly from the ground, only to sink down, shiver, relax and stretch out, dead, its head falling forward.

The Baby burst into tears.

“Poor birdy. It’s all bloody. I wish it didn’t smell horrid.”

“Would you have liked it for a pet?” scoffed Treachy. “Gosh, but it was some fight, wasn’t it, Enley? And the mongoose won.”

At that instant the report of a shot reached them.

“It’s Zack,” said Enley. “Wonder if he got the big fellow he was after.”

Leaving the dead vulture, they all three made toward the cabbage field. In the midst of it they saw Zack, bending over some dark object.

## ISLAND FARM

"Jiminy, he did make a hit," jubilated Enley.  
"Come along, let's see what he got."

As they approached Zack lifted his head and waved an arm wildly.

"Just look what I've done," he yelled at them.

Lying in a row, broadside on, three pigs were extended one behind the other.

"I got those three pigs with one single shot," said Zack, impressively. "One shot! Can you beat that? Bang, I let drive at this first feller, dropped him in his tracts, and was half way toward him before I realized that I'd got these two too. By jinks!"

He stopped, incapable of expressing the mad triumph he felt.

Side by side lay the three black pigs, Zack's shot having gone right through the three of them.

"The worst about it is," Zack declared desperately, "that no one 'll ever believe it."

"I don't see how they can help believe it," said Enley indignantly. "The girls and I heard your one shot and came right down here."

"By gum, Enley, this is about one of the most wonderful shots in the world!"

"I wish Leatherstocking could see it," breathed Treachy, just then buried in Cooper's tales,

## DIFFERENT ADVENTURES

deeply in love with that hero of *The Last of the Mohicans*.

Zack squatted on his heels, his eyes fondly on his bag.

“Or Daniel Boone or Davy Crockett,” he added. “Men like that would appreciate such a shot.”

“Jinks, Zack, this’ll be something to tell Uncle Ned.”

“Well, let’s lug ’em home,” proposed the intrepid hunter, rising. He laid hold of the biggest of the three porkers, Enley grasped the hind feet of another, and Treachy and the Baby hauled the third.

They laid the pigs in a row at the foot of the steps leading to the veranda and went into summon the clan. Out they came, all of them, even Charles and Sadie, grinning widely. Over and over again Zack recited the details of his tremendous achievement.

“All you so eloquently say must be true,” Papa agreed. “I heard your single shot. The next time you plan a thing of this kind, I’ll take a snap of you doing it.”

“Shucks, no one in the world could do a thing like that twice,” Zack maintained. “Three pigs at one single. . . .”

## ISLAND FARM

"Shot," put in Papa. "Count 'em, three pigs, three. Shall we change the boy's name to Nimrod, that mighty hunter?" and he turned to the Princess.

She, her chin in her hand, leaned on the veranda rail and smiled down at her excited son.

"We ought to celebrate such a magnificent event," she said. "Suppose we knock off work to-morrow, when Alice comes, and go for a picnic. She'll be here about nine, which will give us plenty of time."

They shrieked acquiescence, and Wendo added:

"We'll take some chops from these and broil 'em at the fire, won't it be jolly!"

"Let's go to that spring we heard about, by the little mountain, and we can climb it after lunch." This from Enley.

So it was agreed.

Alice arrived promptly next morning, driven over by one of Brandon-Smith's servants, a nice old negro with white wool that made him look like certain monkeys, especially as he was small and wizened. Her "box," as she called it, was on the seat beside her, and she had also brought a pair of parrakeets to give to the Baby. The Baby went quite wild with delight, and was seen all that



## DIFFERENT ADVENTURES

day with the small tame things climbing over her, for they would go anywhere perfectly contented and Alice said they'd love a picnic.

Of course Alice had to hear the story of the pigs, and also of the vulture and the mongoose. And then she was hurried into one of Wendo's garments, a blue straight frock that wouldn't be harmed by picnicking, for her own clothes were too dainty and frail to be taken into the woods.

Presently they were off, baskets packed with good things to eat, Deedah and Enley riding ahead on Tavi and Rikki-Tikki, the others heaped into the phaëton, Papa walking over. The Baby wanted to take the parrot along as well as the parrakeets, but was overruled.

"She'll be so lonely," pleaded the Baby.

"I tell you what, you give her a piece of sugar," counseled Deedah, "and then she won't mind." Sugar, in the interests of Polly's health, was usually taboo, so the Baby, highly delighted, gave the bird a lump, graciously accepted with an extended claw and a "Oh, hell, come again, come again," that convulsed Baby and the others with amusement.

Alice, who had been greeted on her arrival with unrestrained shouts by her new young friends, quite as if she had been known to them all their

## ISLAND FARM

lives, got over her shyness before she began to be shy, as she whispered to Wendo later, on the way to the picnic.

“No one’s ever shy with us,” Wendo replied. “You see, we don’t bother about just being polite. If we hate people it’s no use pretending not to, and if we love ’em, and we love you, you bet, then there isn’t any use either in the polite business. It only makes one feel like strangers.”

Alice agreed that this was an excellent point of view

Their destination was a little valley said to be very beautiful, with a swimming pool made by a large spring, and a mountain peak from whose summit, so report said, all the island could be seen. The road to this valley was steep, twisting on itself like an eel at the end of line, about four or five miles from Eureka Pen. A huge silkcotton or ceiba tree marked the spot where the valley road left the highway, and here Deedah and Enley waited for the carriage to come up with them.

The smooth, paye gray trunk of this giant tree rose straight into the air a full hundred feet before branching out into contorted boughs that formed a rather small head. It was a landmark for miles, and was said to be feared, or venerated, by the negroes, for what reason no one could say.

## DIFFERENT ADVENTURES

Charles, appealed to, was noncommittal. "Him big, bad tree," was all he would answer, "no stop near him."

But the two children felt no fear, looking curiously up to the lofty branches, and farther yet to where a Johnniecrow swung in immense circles high in the intense blue sky, without a perceptible movement of its great wings.

"Some tree all right," declared Enley. "Wonder why the niggers are afraid of the thing."

"Guess it's got to do with their voodoo business. Oh, look, Enley, there's a small trail on this side leading away into the woods."

"Sure enough. Let's see where it goes. We can tie the horses here and run down a way, anyhow, and be back before the crowd can possibly get here."

Deedah hesitated. Though nothing would have made her acknowledge it, she felt afraid. But Enley was already on the ground, tying Rikki, so she followed his example in silence. The two swung into the trail, which wound between matted walls of foliage, slightly upward. After a few steps they were in the sunless dusk of the tropic forest, a twilight of dim green. Enley led the way, peering.

Presently they came to a series of rough stone

## ISLAND FARM

steps, evidently cut long ago in the living rock. Climbing these, they found that the trail plunged abruptly down. Cautiously they advanced.

Suddenly Enley halted, holding up a warning hand.

"Look," he whispered, for whispering suited that gloomy place.

The trail came to an abrupt end directly ahead, at the brink of a great round hole, or rather the mouth of a large pit, rimmed with whitish stone over which fell tangled creepers. Directly opposite, above their heads and across the cavity, a sharp, pointed rock jutted out part way, and on this rock were the charred fragments of a bonfire.

"Jiminy-crips, what a hole!" muttered Deedah, peering down into the black depths, that seemed to have no bottom.

"See, there's been a fire on that stone sticking out there," said Enley, speaking in the same hushed way. "Wonder how on earth any one got on it."

For close round the brink of the gaping void stood the forest, impenetrable and unviolated, a mass of sturdy trunks, lianas, thorny shrubs, knotted and twisted together.

"Let's go back, Enley. I don't like this place."

"Say, Deedah, I bet this is a sink hole!"

## DIFFERENT ADVENTURES

“Well, if you fell into it I guess you’d go clear on through to China. Come along, Enley,” and Deedah began to move back. “What’s this?” She stooped to pick up a small object on the ground. The two studied it in the dimness. It seemed to be a tightly bound bundle, a few inches long, of small white bones, bright feathers, bits of fur.

“Huh,” grunted Enley. “Let’s show it to Charles when we get home.”

They returned to the ceiba, to find that the carriage had not yet arrived, so they sat down on the turf with their backs against the great tree, to wait for it.

A few minutes drifted by in silence, when there was a rustle behind them, and then a thin, shrill voice cried out, with startling effect:

“Little buckra lord and lady. . . .”

They leaped up, whirling round, to see standing at the opening to the trail they had just left, the weird old woman they had first encountered so many months ago in her own cabin.

Her eyes flashed at them, she extended one of her skinny hands:

“Give back lil’ charm to poor old nigger woman,” she whined. “I tell Annancy to be good to little white lord an’ lady.”

## ISLAND FARM

Hastily Deedah tossed the queer bunch of bones and feathers to the hag, who caught it, smiled hideously upon the two, pressed the charm to her forehead and then her lips, stepped back and vanished.

Deedah turned breathlessly to the horses, and began to scramble into the saddle.

"I'm going back to meet the others," she announced firmly.

Enley said nothing, but also mounted. However, just then the heads of Ada and Pete came nodding into view, and shouts hailed them.

"Guess we'd better not speak to 'em about it," suggested Enley, and Deedah nodded: "'Em," in such circumstances meant the elder members of the family. When you weren't sure how an item was going to be received you kept still about it. An embargo on riding by themselves might be issued, and they didn't want that.

They reached the picnic grounds without further incident, and a lovely spot it proved to be. A bright spring bubbled between piled rocks, fell over them into a broad deep pool, and wandered away, under shrouding ferns and flowers, in a pretty stream. An open, shady glen lay back of the spring, spreading mahogany and ironwood trees set about it in a parklike manner. The place

## DIFFERENT ADVENTURES

was really a box cañon, widest where the spring emerged, narrowing between high stony walls as it reached back to the mountain.

They quickly unharnessed and unsaddled and tied the horses where they could graze, then set the lunch baskets out in a pretty place under one of the largest trees, and started to gather wood for the fire. While they were busy over this Papa arrived, having come another, shorter but rougher route. His cheeks were flushed, his eyes bright with the exercise, his thin woolen shirt open at the throat, his wide-brimmed hat in one hand, a stout cane in the other.

“Come on and get your swim,” he called.

With joyous yells they grabbed their bathing suits and hied them to crannies in the rocks to change.

“Can you swim, Alice?” demanded Wendo, as she and her friend raced down to the pool, already occupied by Papa and the two boys, who were puffing and splashing about, pushing each other under and howling with laughter.

“No, but I can float a little. I do wish I could swim. Oh, look at Zack!” The child gasped as Zack, poising an instant on an outstanding rock, turned a back flip and disappeared under the water.



## ISLAND FARM

"Haven't you ever seen anybody do that? Shucks, we can all do it." And with a shrill yell Wendo rushed for the rock and dived head foremost into the pool. Alice paused at the grassy brink on the near side and looked about her, rather frightened.

"Come along, chick," and Papa offered a hand. "I'll see you don't get into any trouble."

"Look at me," sputtered the Baby, who was keeping afloat with short, violent strokes, her head only just out of water. With the words she vanished under it, coming up gasping. Deedah grabbed her and pulled her to her feet.

"Idjit," she smiled at the child. "You can't swim and talk at the same time yet, you see."

"I *like* to go under," asserted the Baby stoutly.

Papa devoted himself to teaching Alice. First he let her float on her back, then bade her wade in waist high and bend over slowly with arms stretched wide, till her face lay in the water.

"Open your eyes now and look at your toes," he told her, and after a few efforts Alice succeeded, laughing and amazed, crying, "I didn't know you could see under water!"

Before the bath was over she was floating flat on her stomach, eyes open and breath held quietly.

## DIFFERENT ADVENTURES

“That’ll do for this time,” Papa told her. “Next time you’ll begin to kick out and move your arms, and first thing you know you’ll be swimming.”

Alice, already adopting the manners and language of her new friends, exclaimed joyously, “Gosh, what a lark that’ll be,” and leaped like a young kid on the smooth grass.

It was eleven o’clock by the time they were dressed again, and it was decided that those who meant to climb should do so at once, in the time left before luncheon was due. The Princess, Alice, and the Baby were not going up.

“Now, don’t get lost, and don’t be too long,” warned the Princess as Papa led off.

“Did you ever know me to be either lost or late?” asked Papa, and when Mumsie answered that she certainly had, hundreds of times, he merely laughed scoffingly. But the children were greatly tickled.

Anyhow, no one got lost this time. It proved to be a good stiff climb, first through forest, then over rough open steeps, and toward the end a scramble over rocks tumbled every which way. Just an hour from the time they left the camp they stood on the summit, looking at the panorama spread before them. It was a tremendous min-

## ISLAND FARM

gling of mountains, cañons, ocean, green valleys, fields of sugar cane, deep forests, thinly scattered houses gleaming white amid the glistening green. Enley pointed out to Deedah the tall ceiba where they had encountered the obeah woman. A thin coil of blue smoke trailed upward from the woods behind it.

“Gee, I bet that fire on the rock’s going,” Enley said.

“Yeah, I guess so. Wonder, by the way, where that old woman was hidden when we were at the hole.”

“It’s a darned queer place,” concluded her brother.

They went back by a steeper, shorter track, passing the entrance to a small cave, into which, of course, all must peer. For an instant they were startled by seeing two yellow eyes in the blackness, but soon they saw that these belonged to a large white owl. Zack climbed up near it and found its mate sitting on the nest close by.

“Jiminy, Pops,” he called down, “there’re two little ones here. Can’t I take one with me?”

But Papa thought not, so they left them behind, the owls by that time chattering their beaks at the intruders, and continued down the slope, slipping and sliding, hastening wolf-hungry to the meal

## DIFFERENT ADVENTURES

that awaited them. Woof, who was along, started a mongoose or something at one time, at least they heard him barking wildly for quite a while, paying no attention to vociferous commands to return. When they reached the camp, however, there he was looking apologetic.

Luncheon was almost ready. Yams boiled in a pot, big chunks of snowy whiteness, Alice and the Baby were making toast on long sticks, a cloth was spread on a flat rock heaped with sandwiches, hard-boiled eggs, avocado pears cut in half, French dressing in a bottle ready for them, and a pile of chops from Zack's famous three porkers, or one of them, waited to be broiled, each man for himself. In the middle of the cloth was a basket piled with cherrymoyas, guineps, pawpaws, sweetsops, finger bananas, and oranges. A feast indeed. They cheered it, prodded the chops with sharp sticks and were broiling them, a circle of red-faced cooks, in a jiffy.

The Princess, when she had heard all about the climb and the view and the cave and the tiny owls, told of something that had happened in the glade.

"We were all busy getting lunch," she said, "when I heard a rock rolling from that slope there, and saw a black man come jumping and sliding down, more like a goat than a human being.

## ISLAND FARM

He landed quite near and came running to me, dropped on his knees and began jabbering that way they have, perfectly incomprehensible to me. But the Baby has the hang of it, and so has Alice, and they said he wanted me to hide him. Just then there came a queer high call from the woods back there at the foot of the valley, and up he jumped and made off that way," the Princess pointed to the opposite side of the cañon, "and in no time he was out of sight among the rough rocks. Woof had been after him, and started to chase him again, but I made him stop and lie down. Nothing more happened. Alice said he was afraid of the voodoo."

"So that's what Woof was barking at," said Treachy. "Woof loves to chase niggers . . . bad dog."

Woof, still apologetic, wagged his tail violently and panted.

But now the chops were ready to eat, and the serious work began. Voodoo and its victims were forgotten. By the time the party had given its undivided attention to what lay before them for half an hour, nothing much remained. The girls cleared up while Papa and the boys played at tossing horseshoes, brought along for the purpose. Then they all joined in various games, duck on

## DIFFERENT ADVENTURES

the rock, leap frog, improvised baseball with a soft ball for the sake of the girls. Alice, delighted, bewildered, her fair hair blowing, was in and out of everything. Finally they started an Indian war dance round the dying fire, twisting and stamping and grunting and yip-yipping. It was the finale.

“I do like the way you do,” she confided on the homeward drive, snuggled between Wendo and Treachy. “It’s so jolly to make so much noise and rush around all you want to.”

“Of course,” Wendo told her, “at times we get into some bad fights, and are hellishly mad at each other. But it’s all in a lifetime,” she finished philosophically.

“Yes, I s’pose it is,” agreed Alice. It was a new world to her.

## CHAPTER X

### RAIN

**I**T WAS raining. Hour after hour, until the hours rolled into days, it rained. The rains that had gone before were nothing to this. The whole world seemed to be melting into water. The mud was frightful.

"It's the rainy season," said Alice calmly. "It'll keep this up for ages."

"But we were told the rainy season didn't begin for a couple of months yet," said the Princess, in a worried voice. "The vegetables can't stand this wet. We thought we would get most of them shipped before the rains really started."

"Up in these hills it begins almost any time. This is the rainiest part of the island, you know."

No, they hadn't known.

A letter had come from Cousin Frank saying that the first shipment had reached New York in fair condition and that he had got a good price considering . . . but the charges incident to marketing the stuff hadn't left very much over.



## RAIN

“You ought to send a certain steady amount that can be counted on,” he wrote. “Then two men here will take it all regularly and pay a fixed amount, a little below the retail prices.” He sent a list of the most wanted items.

So, in spite of the terrific downpour the boys and Charles got ready a second load, without any outside help, for the blacks would not be tempted to work in the rain.

“They busy now anyhow,” Charles said.

“Busy? What with?” asked the Princess, impatiently.

But Charles only shook his head.

The boys left at dawn with a small load, all that could be got ready. They wore slickers and fisherman hats, and looked like canaries perched up on the high seat, while a huge tarpaulin spread over the crates and boxes sheltered the vegetables. Every one stood on the veranda waving them goodspeed till they disappeared behind the banana clumps at the turn of the drive.

Mumsie decided to hold a class in dressmaking, since there was nothing to do but stay in the house. They settled to work, Wendo reading aloud from Conan Doyle’s *White Company*, which, they all agreed, was a peach of a story.

“Makes you think of *Little Women*,” muttered

## ISLAND FARM

Deedah. "Not the book, of course, I mean all of us sitting sewing and Wendo reading. Wish it were snow falling instead of this perfectly disgusting rain. Is this sleeve right, Mumsie?"

Mumsie looked and nodded. "Hush, and let Wendo read," she said.

The morning sped while they worked and listened and chatted. Treachy, as they began to gather up the scraps and put things away, remarked that she thought those old times were a lot nicer to live in.

"I'd like to have been a knight like DuGuesclin," she declared.

"You'd have been a woman, not a man," Deedah objected. "And have had to stay home in a great tower and embroider, or just strap the armor on some one who was a knight."

They walked to the window and stood staring for a while at the downpour.

"I think I'll write some poems," observed Deedah, yawning. "Our sweetest songs, you know, says Shelley, are born of saddest thought. Goodness knows my thoughts are getting pretty darned sad with all this rain."

"Do you write real poems?" asked Alice, impressed.

## RAIN

"Oh well, you know. . . ." Deedah was modestly vague.

"You can write when it pours, but I can't paint," it was Wendo who spoke. "It's so dark, and there's nothing to see."

"You've only painted about four pictures anyhow since we came here," Treachy pointed out. "You ought to paint much more."

"I ought to get some lessons. Some day I'll go to Paris and learn to be a great painter, a real artist."

"Look," exclaimed Deedah at this juncture.

From round the corner came a torrent of thick red muddy water, roaring down the slope. On it floated small plants, bits of wood, branches, a mess of things.

With an excited yelp the gang poured out on the veranda, circled it and came upon the scene of destruction. The famous tank had burst and the water was sweeping out in a cascade that turned red as it went.

"Ye gods!" exclaimed Treachy dramatically.

The Baby yelled, whether with delight or terror it was hard to say, though the sight appeared on the whole to give her pleasure. As they stood staring, with a crash, the whole side of the cis-

## ISLAND FARM

tern gave away, and the remaining mass of water emptied itself over Mumsie's poor flower garden.

Every one was by now on the scene. Papa had come from his study and Mumsie from somewhere, and Charles and Sadie and the cook. The parrot, in her cage on the veranda, screeched. The blacks yelled "Oy-oy-oy"; the children shouted.

"My poor flowers," lamented the Princess. "If ever I get within reach of the idiot that built that cistern I'll, I'll . . ." but she could think of nothing bad enough to threaten him with.

"Tar and feather, and ride him on a rail," chanted Deedah, "as the women of Marblehead did to some one. But I tell you what, Mumsie, we kids will put on our bathing suits and go and gather up those flowers and plants and bushes and plant 'em again in the garden. The cistern's all emptied now. Charles can get the garden into shape."

"There'll be no shower bath for us now except the rain," said Wendo, "but I guess we'll have enough of that O. K. so it doesn't matter."

"There's no more use crying over spilled water than spilled milk," remarked Papa, turning away. "But if the house begins to go, let me know, some of you." He disappeared.

## RAIN

Alice too put on her bathing suit, and the Baby insisted on doing the same, so that presently the five of them were splashing about in the steadily falling rain, retrieving rose bushes and irises, freesias and heliotrope plants, and all the rest of the bright array that had been flourishing under the Princess' skilled care.

"Lots more fun than sewing," Treachy confided to Alice, as the two dug out a mud-submerged plant, while the warm rain fell amiably upon them. "Rain, if you don't try to keep dry in it, is darned nice, I think."

"I never went out in it like this before," Alice replied. "It's perfectly sporting the way your father and mother let you do all sorts of jolly things."

"Well," Treachy spoke judiciously, "you never can tell. Sometimes they stop our doing the simplest things for no reason at all. I guess they just get into a sort of 'don't you do that' way. Don't you hate to think of growing up? It seems to me as if grown-up people had a miserable kind of time. They don't like any of the most exciting things, like dressing up and pretending you're some one else, or having secrets, or playing horse or anything hardly."

Alice nodded. "Of course, my father's natur-

## ISLAND FARM

ally sad, so he's even more miserable," she said.

"Why is he naturally sad?"

"I don't know, but something terrible happened long ago, in England, and that's why we don't live there. He's hardly ever said anything about it, but just a little so I know we can't go there."

"He didn't kill any one in England, did he?" whispered Treachy, suddenly remembering Papa's accusations.

"Kill any one! Of course not. What made you think he did?"

"Well, people do kill other people sometimes, and there are lots of wicked people that might just as well be killed. Perfectly nice good people might kill some one bad, you know," Treachy hastened to reply. "And I thought maybe he did."

"I don't think it's that," Alice returned thoughtfully. "He's sad more as if some one had tried to kill him, I think, some one he liked. Poor Papa." To Treachy's horror she suddenly bent her head, flung an arm across her eyes, and wept, her tears adding to the rain on her wet cheeks.

"Don't, Alice, don't. He's going to be all right and ever and ever so happy, you wait and see. He's such a nice, lovely man!" Treachy thumped the soaked shoulder of her friend heartily.

## RAIN

Presently the little girl recovered, grinned rather feebly, and lent her aid in lugging a recovered lavender bush to the garden. Charles, in drenched cotton shirt and trousers, a stout broad-brimmed hat on to keep his wool dry, was at work there under the Princess's directions. She wore a yellow oil-cloth coat of Papa's much too big for her. Luckily only one end of the garden had been flooded out, and by hard work they got it into fair shape during the afternoon.

Mumsie made them all take a hot bath and smart rub, and Sadie built a fire in the living room. Evening came, and the boys had not returned. Mumsie was troubled.

"They ought to be back. I wish I'd not allowed them to go in this frightful weather. The bridge may have been swept away." All sorts of anxious thoughts came to her.

But the children were not disturbed. The boys always came out all right from whatever difficulties assailed them, and they were quite sure this time would be no exception. Happily, in the warm lamplight and the soft glow of the fire, built of mahogany logs, they played various games. Alice and Treachy had a backgammon board between them, the Baby was giggling over her parakeets, which traveled solemnly up and down her



## ISLAND FARM

arm, reached her neck, pecked at her ear. Wendo drew a picture in pencil of Trudy as she licked herself comfortably before the blazing hearth. Deedah, the fingers on one hand marking the syllables, wrote at a poem with the other. And at last, after Sadie had come in to ask whether they should wait dinner, and been answered in the affirmative, the noise of wheels and a shout announced that the boys were back.

They streamed out on the veranda to welcome them, watching them climb stiffly out of the high seat and come up the steps, while Charles led the team away.

"Gosh, this is certainly the wettest place in the world," Zack commented. "Down there it wasn't raining at all, everything dry and hot. Struck this again 'bout halfway up. Gee, but we're sopping!"

So they were, in spite of their oilskins. "Sat in a pool most of the way," Zack explained. "The wagon seat is kind of scooped and the rain collects in it and our slickers got rolled up." He stood by the fire, pulling at his wet things. "Haven't had much luck, Mumsie," he said.

"Luck? What do you mean, dear?"

Zack glanced at Enley, entering from the hall where he had hung his slicker.

## RAIN

“Never mind just now,” Mumsie interposed. “Go and get into dry things and we’ll talk later.”

Papa had come in, and he challenged Deedah to a game of chess, while they waited the reappearance of the brothers. Presently Sadie slipped in to ask should she serve dinner.

“Just as soon as the young masters are through changing,” the Princess told her, and she slipped out again.

At dinner Zack told the outcome of their trip. It was not encouraging.

The ship, it seemed, had so large a load of bananas that the captain refused to be bothered with anything more.

“He said he hadn’t guaranteed to take any small consignments,” Zack declared. “Said he never would guarantee to do it. He wouldn’t listen to us at all, and we just had to drive away.”

Mumsie looked set and still, but she spoke calmly:

“What did you do with the stuff? Throw it away?”

“Oh, no!” It was Enley who spoke now. “We knew an old man at the market, an old brown man. He’d been nice to us when we were down before, because we found a notebook he’d lost and took it to him. We told him about the captain and he

## ISLAND FARM

said he could buy our stuff, because he bought things for the club, you know there is a golf club and house for the white men, but he couldn't give very much for it. He gave us three pounds for all of it."

With the words Enley brought out a double handful of silver pieces, and laid them on the table.

"Golly, it looks like a lot of money," exclaimed Wendo. "Isn't it lots, Mumsie?"

"Just about pay for the seeds, I should think," the Princess said, in a small but steady voice. "Never mind, we won't talk about it any more. You did the best that could be done, boys. But that captain told me he could handle anything we wanted to ship. . . ." Suddenly she stopped, gave Papa a desperate sort of look, jumped up and left the room. Papa, without a word, hastily followed her, shutting the door behind him.

The children, left alone, exchanged frightened glances, their faces grim.

"I think this vegetable farm idea is busted," remarked Zack, after an interval. "And when I think of the way we've worked over the stuff . . . well, good-by, fortune!"

"I hate this God-forsaken, niggered land of truck," said Enley, passionately. "We've got to

## RAIN

get back home." He turned his face away from his brothers and sisters, and stared at the fire.

"D'you think all our money has gone away again?" asked Treachy anxiously.

"Maybe not quite, but it can't last forever and ever," said Deedah. "And all the vegetables are just rotting in this rain, even if we could make the captain take them away to New York. Gosh, what'll we do next, I wonder? Poor little Mum-sie!"

"I'm going to find that sailor again," said Zack, "and ship aboard with him. I've always wanted to go to sea, anyway. That sailor said captains were always on the lookout for likely boys, and I guess I'm a likely boy."

"Me too," from Enley.

"Jiminy," exclaimed Deedah, "this has certainly been a most misfortunate day. First the cistern busts, and now the farm."

"The cistern?"

"Oh, of course, you didn't know about that. Yes, it's gone," and the tale was told.

"By gum! And it cost fifty dollars," commented Zack.

"Charles said he thought that obeah woman had put a spell on this place," contributed Enley, in

## ISLAND FARM

an anxious tone. "Wonder if she really could?"

Wendo laughed.

"I heard Charles tell Papa that," she said, "and Papa answered that the obeah woman might have bad magic, but that he had a lot worse, and if she didn't look out he'd put a spell on her. Charles looked as scared as the dickens!" They all laughed at that, and to this cheerful sound Mumsie returned, smiling, with Papa. Dinner went on cheerfully again, just as though the rain were not pouring, and there were no gutted cistern, no ruined prospects, and no witch-woman to bother.

As soon as the meal was over Papa and Mumsie went off to his study, and the children continued their discussion of the future.

"I think we'll both run away to sea," Zack was firm. "Then after a time we can send back some money to all of you."

"You might work your way back on one of the banana ships to New York and get a job somewhere," Deedah suggested. "We could write to Uncle Ned and to the Tramp and maybe they could find something for you."

"Crikey, that's a good idea! There's plenty of things to do in America, and we're big enough now to do pretty near anything. Say, Enley,

## RAIN

s'pose we ask one of those captains about it next time we're down there?"

Enley was agreed. Deedah, the light of adventure in her eyes, declared that she too would like to ship back. "I could put on boys' clothes," she pointed out excitedly, "and no one would know."

"Could you swab a deck, my girl?" Zack grinned at her.

Deedah executed a double shuffle in what she conceived to be true seaman's style.

"Avast there, my hearties," she cried. "I've swabbed a room often enough, why not a deck?"

Really, it was great fun, this busting up of the farm, if you only took it in the right spirit.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE VISITOR FROM YUCATAN

**F**OR a week they had almost unbroken rain, and then at last a warm, shining day overspread the drenched hilltop. Sweet odors were on the air, new flowers bloomed on tree, shrub and in the grass, birds sang, frogs piped and croaked, butterflies went wavering through the sunlight. It was unbelievably beautiful. The prisoned children went flying out with long glad shouts and disappeared in every direction on their own mysterious affairs. At luncheon, served on the veranda again, the whole family met, each full of talk, bursting with life and the joy of recovered spirits.

Papa, taking his place at the table, caught a glimpse of a horseman at the bend of the road about a mile down the hill.

“Some one’s coming our way,” he remarked, and sat down to serve the ackie stew, a lucious thing made from this tree fruit, a scarlet pod with



## THE VISITOR FROM YUCATAN

poisonous black seeds that had to be carefully removed.

The tableful crowded to look. Sure enough, a rider, and beyond mistake a white man, was leisurely mounting the hill.

“Who in the world can it be?” wondered the Princess. “Probably some one who took the turn below by mistake. I suppose we’ll have to give him some lunch if he gets here.”

“That ought to be in about fifteen minutes, if his horse moves at all,” Papa remarked. “Hurry, children, and we can make a pretty clean sweep before he arrives. Pass those breadfruit, Treachy, and quick about it. What’s for dessert, Sadie?”

Sadie, grinning, answered in her soft, drawling voice:

“Only just got narthin’ except matrimony to-day, Massa.”

Matrimony was the island name of a desert made by mixing pawpaw pulp and oranges together, and very good.

“Well, bring on your matrimony,” said Papa cheerfully, carefully rolling a breadfruit in Wendo’s direction over the shining table.

“Will you behave,” laughed the Princess, “and

## ISLAND FARM

just stop your guzzling. We'll wait for this stranger, I tell you."

So they waited to the extent of eating slowly, and in five minutes Woof's excited barking announced the rider's arrival. He came riding round the clump of banana plants that hid the entrance to the pen, and made for the steps. Every one watched with interest, for a white visitor was a rare bird at Eureka.

"Hallo, old man," he remarked casually, as Papa, rising, went to meet him. "Devil of a place to find!"

Papa gave a whoop, and plunged down the steps to grab the stranger's hand and drag him from his horse.

"What on earth's brought you here, old man?" he demanded. "Say, Princess, if here isn't Lord Byron. We heard of you last somewhere in Central America."

"Yucatan," the man informed him, mounting the steps, while Charles appearing like a noiseless spirit, led away the horse, and the Princess, all smiles, made her way round the table to give her hand and welcome.

"Just in time for some lunch," she said. "How did you find out we were here? But first let me take you inside. You'll want to wash up after

## THE VISITOR FROM YUCATAN

that long ride." She and the visitor and Papa all went into the house, still talking.

"Why," exclaimed Deedah, "I thought Lord Byron was dead!"

"I wish it was Shelley instead," declared Treachy. "I like Shelley ever so much better. Lord Byron was always so stuck on himself and such a smarty."

"We know Shelley's dead," Deedah replied. "Drowned. I guess this isn't the real Lord Byron, anyway."

And it wasn't. Just a nickname Papa had given his friend, for reasons of his own. This was explained when the elders returned, and the visitor sat down to the delayed meal. "All but one of these is ours," Mumsie said, waving a hand round the attentive circle, "and she's the next thing to it. Now tell us how you got here."

So he told them how, having finished a big job of excavating among the ancient ruins of Yucatan, he had stopped off on his way back to New York to see a man he knew on the island, and had heard of their being here.

"But I've ridden pretty well all over the bally place," he remarked. "What in the world ever got you up here?"

"It's a long, and in places a sad story," said

## ISLAND FARM

Papa, "and you'll hear it all. But now tell us about yourself."

Sadie had brought in fresh ackie stew, and avocado pears and fried strips of plantain, and a big jugful of crushed fruits and tea and water, and while they ate they listened to the tale of how the visitor from Yucatan got to their island.

"I left a tiny port on the coast in a tramp steamer manned by a gang of pirates," he told them, in a leisurely, easy voice. "I don't believe the decks of the filthy thing had been scrubbed since it was put in commission, some time in the last century. The captain was a thug from Mexico who'd love to have murdered me, but hadn't the nerve. They gave me a hole of a place to sleep in that belonged to the mate, and the first thing I did was to screw a bolt on the inside of the door, as I found there wasn't a lock. Let the captain see me do it, too. Told him it was a *habit* I'd formed in Mexico during a visit I made Diaz. He merely grunted. He got quite amiable toward the end of the trip, when he decided he wasn't goin' to be able either to kill or rob me. But, man, the fun I've had in Yucatan!"

"Good place, eh?"

"You'll have to come there. Beats this island to a frazzle. By the way, why are you here?"

## THE VISITOR FROM YUCATAN

“Just strolling along after our pot of gold, but the blamed thing keeps dodging. Thought we’d roost here and raise spring vegetables and sell in New York for fancy prices. First-rate idea, only it don’t seem to work.”

“If you want to make a pot of money, buy banana land, old man. Or rubber. This chap I came here to see has a huge banana plantation, and he’s simply rolling now. Tell you what, we’ll ride over and see him while I’m here. . . . I forgot to ask whether you could put me up for a bit of a stay?”

“Long as we can keep you here. If you try to get away under a month you’ll find me worse for your health than that tramp captain ever hoped to be. The mere fact that you’re a white man is precious to us. We get ’em all shades on this hill-top except that.”

The visitor laughed.

“Mighty pleasant pen you’ve got, anyhow. I daresay the youngsters like gettin’ all the fruit they can eat and having the niggers wait on ’em, eh, what?”

“Yes, they like it,” returned Papa confidently. “We all do. Fortunately it takes so little to live here that I don’t see why we shouldn’t spend the

## ISLAND FARM

rest of our lives on this hill, even if we can't feed New York with our stuff."

The children exchanged swift glances. Perhaps this was Papa's idea, but it was no longer their own. Enley muttered under his breath to Wendo, beside him:

"Wait till we run away to sea," and Wendo, eyes alight, returned huskily:

"*I'm* going to art school some day, and show me the art school here!"

Deedah gave the two a warning glance across the table. Ambition and adventure might be calling, but they must keep their plans secret yet awhile.

"Bananas are the great crop," went on Lord Byron, neatly emptying the clear fluid from a green coconut into his glass and draining it. "Delicious, these nuts, aren't they! Make you pity the poor wretches who only know the abominations sold in the north. You see, the machinery for selling the fruit is fully developed, and that's as important as the crop itself. But you come to Yucatan."

"What are you finding there?" asked the Princess.

"Lost centuries! Vanished civilizations! Lord,

## THE VISITOR FROM YUCATAN

what a people, what a history, what art are buried there!"

Well, the talk went on, and every one listened, enchanted. Tales of adventures and treasure and strangeness. But after awhile they rose to scatter about their various occupations. The boys wandered round for awhile with Lord Byron, showing him over the place, for he was interested to see what they'd done. Zack showed him where he had killed the three pigs, and he was properly impressed.

"It's a great place in lots of ways," Zack conceded, "but we don't want to stay here always. We want to get back to America."

"And we're going to get back," Enley asserted. "Only it's sort of hard to manage."

"Quite. What do you propose doing?"

The brothers looked at Lord Byron and he looked back, serious and interested.

"We aren't saying anything about it yet," Zack explained, finally, "but our idea is to ship as likely boys on board a steamer going to New York, and when we get there maybe go West to our Uncle Ned, or maybe I'll stay at sea, I've always wanted to go to sea."

"Hmm! If you want to go to sea you ought to get to Annapolis and become a naval officer.



## ISLAND FARM

Well, look here, don't do anything rash. Maybe I can work out something to help you, if you're really set on this.' They assured him they were.

That evening, on the veranda, with the moonlight filling the distant valleys and sleeping in silver on the hills, they all sat listening while their guest, who, Mumsie had explained, was a famous archeologist, told them stories of Yucatan. Great fireflies went blazing through the soft tropic night, owls called, the hum of the night things made the air quiver as the tale ran on. He told of the Indian workers he had, soft-voiced, gentle people, living a mysterious life of their own beyond the rim of the white man's existence; of deep caves running into the mountains for miles; of piled temples and weird carvings, of a great stone head that leaned to look into the depths of a bottomless pool, as though seeking through eternal time to discover the secret hid in those black waters. He told of month-long trips on mules over the mountains and through vast forests, of camps at night beside ice-cold springs in a temperature so hot it was like a Turkish bath. He told of a sudden attack one night, when arrows had flown and two of his men had been wounded, though no enemy had been sighted or heard.

And then of course they had to go to bed.

## CHAPTER XII

### WHY NOT WIN THIS PRIZE?

**T**HE day following that of the arrival of Lord Byron was American Mail Day, a red-letter day at Eureka Pen. Deedah and Treachy were driving to the town to get the expected letters, and were up before six. Happily the rain still held off, though heavy grey clouds were trailing over the mountain tops, ready for wet work at the least provocation.

Sadie had breakfast, hot oatmeal porridge, orange juice, and milk, ready on the side table, and stepped to the door to see them off as Charles brought up the light wagonette and the two small horses.

"You young missies get wet 'fore ever come back," she promised cheerfully. "Him sure goin' rain hard this day. La, far better stay home!"

"On mail day? Hush your noise, Sadie. We'd go even if the clouds burst. But maybe we'd better wear the boys' slickers," and Treachy dashed

## ISLAND FARM

in to get them. The rubber lap robe was in the carriage, snug as snug. "Let 'er rain," said Deedah, as they rattled off, just when the first purple flush heralded the rising sun, and Charles, apparently thinking the permission was addressed to him, responded "Yaas, Missy."

"I think this Yucatan man seems pretty nice," remarked Deedah, as the horses settled to a brisk trot, their heads up and eyes alert for anything scary to shy at. "He talks sort of quiet, but you feel that he's just full of exciting things, and any minute one of 'em's liable to come out and surprise you. After all, Treach, maybe it is best to be a man. See how he can go all by himself into those strange wild places and live with the Indians and everything. . . . We couldn't do that, just because we aren't men."

"Maybe we can." Treachy was hopeful. "I don't see how any one could stop us."

"Yes I know, but I guess we won't. Well, Enley told me he'd talked to Lord Byron and told him Zack and he meant to get back to America and that he said maybe he'd help get 'em off."

"He did?"

"Yep. And, Treach, I heard Mumsie and Pops talking together yesterday morning. I was gathering pomegranates off the hedge, and they

## WHY NOT WIN THIS PRIZE?

were on the other side, on that long seat Enley made, where the view is so good. Well, I heard Mumsie say that we were about ruined."

"Gee! What for, Dee?"

"Well, you see we paid a whole lot of money for this Eureka place, thousands of dollars, and we have to make the last payment soon, and there'll be hardly anything left in the bank after that. And she said all the seeds and tools and the moving cost terribly, and the money for the blacks to work, and fertilizing stuff. She said we'd spent money like water till it was about all gone. And of course when that happens people are ruined."

"What will we do?" Treachy's voice was dismal, yet a thrill ran through her. After all, something would turn up, for something always did. And change was delightful, if only because it was change.

"I guess we kids will have to begin to do things. The boys of course mean to go to sea, and then maybe out West and be cowboys. I think I'll be a writer. I don't mean only poems, but stories and things, and get on a newspaper, and make heaps of money."

"Oh, Deedah, I don't want to stay here and do nothing. I want to go and make money too."

## ISLAND FARM

“Yes, but what *can* you do?” Her sister put it practically.

“I should think if the boys could find things to do, I could. And anyhow, how are you going to get to America?”

“That’s what I’m going to talk to Lord Byron about. He seems to be so sensible, I’m sure he can suggest something. You heard how he told Papa about buying a banana plantation if he wanted to make money. I s’pose he can’t, now most of the money has gone, but it shows Lord Byron is full of good ideas.”

“Well, if you go, I’m going too,” Treachy asserted firmly.

On they flew, down the long winding slopes of the excellent road, and now and then Tavi gave a lurch and a plunge, seeing dreadful apparitions in a banana leaf fallen across the road, a small donkey suddenly coming round a curve, anything at all. Deedah would haul in on the lines, speak soothing words, cuss a bit, “Drat the horse, you’d think she had no brains at all.” And so, chatting, welcoming the dispersal of the mist and cloud and the warming rays of the sun as it climbed the heights and beamed upon them, the two girls got to the town and made straight for the post office. It was a pretty little town with winding

## WHY NOT WIN THIS PRIZE?

streets and white houses buried under purple bougainvillæa or the dark, glossy green of jasmine starred with fragrant white flowers, with tall palms in the gardens and laurel and ilex trees along the way. The smell of the sea stirred through it.

The brown postmaster nodded at them smiling and handed out a thick packet of letters, some bundles of books, newspapers, and magazines.

"Rainy season up where you live?" he asked, amiably.

"Pouring. Hallo, here's a letter for me. . . . Oh, Treachy!"

Deedah grasped an envelope in her hand, and actually paled under her rich tan.

"What's the matter?" gasped Treachy.

"Come on," muttered Deedah, making for the street. Outside she stopped:

"I—Treachy, I sent a poem to this magazine, and here's the answer." She showed the envelope, with its engraved name and address in the corner.

Bright-eyed they stared at each other, oblivious of the people jostling in and out of the office.

"My goodness!" Treachy spoke at last. "Why don't you open it?"

"Let's wait till we've done the errands and are

## ISLAND FARM

driving home. I couldn't bear to look at it with all these people round us. Come along, let's hurry." Firmly holding the precious letter, Deedah, her slicker hanging open and flapping about her, for it was hot down here, followed closely by Treachy, also flapping along like some queer bird, hastened to buy the groceries and other items on the list the Princess had made out the evening before. This done, they piled the packages into the back of the wagonette, and went to the little sweet shop for some chocolates and a glass of ginger pop, a treat never denied themselves when they went to town. And here Deedah was prevailed upon by impatient Treachy to open her letter.

It contained a sheet of notepaper and a long blue slip.

Deedah, fairly trembling, looked at the blue slip, her eyes wide with emotion.

"Treachy," she whispered, "it's a check . . . for *fifteen* dollars!"

"Oh, crikey!"

"And look what the letter says:

"'We are accepting your poem, "Twilight," for publication in the Magazine. Thanking you for submitting it, we enclose our check herewith, Sincerely yours, the Editors.'"



## WHY NOT WIN THIS PRIZE?

A look of rapture, wonder, incredulity struggling with each other lighted Deedah's face. Blissfully she paid for the treat, and the two girls climbed into the wagonette and started the eager horses toward home. Like Tennyson's brook, they chattered, chattered as they went, so happy that they hardly noticed, as they wound their way up, when they struck the rain that poured down on them steadily for the last three or four miles. Deedah, thrilling with the thrill of the recognized artist, seethed with the sense of power. Gosh, nothing could stop her now!

Eureka Pen, soaked in the downpour, welcomed them damply. They tore into the living room. The family was gathered there, waiting their arrival to go to luncheon.

"Mercy, girls, leave those coats outside," cried Mumsie. "You're soaking the whole place. . . ."

"Mumsie, Mumsie, *look!*" shrieked Deedah, waving the check at her astonished mother.

Well, it was thoroughly satisfactory! Every one, including Lord Byron, was pleased, excited, and complimentary. Deedah was the heroine of the day. But when Papa asked her to bring a copy of the poem so that he could read it to the company, she explained there was no copy. She had sent the one and only to the magazine. All she

## ISLAND FARM

could say was that it was entitled "Twilight," and had mountains and fireflies in it, and a sort of sadness.

"Well, we'll see it in print," said Papa, "which is more than can be said of any other of Deedah's poems so far. A first-accepted manuscript is one of the miracles of life, and this absurd child has had it before ever getting a 'returned with thanks.' That, Deedah, will come later," and Papa grinned at her. "But never mind. No one can ever take the triumph of this event from you. And now let's eat."

So they went to table, and passed round the rest of the mail. Lord Byron was almost as pleased as Deedah when he found a Sunday article in a New York paper on his work in Yucatan, with flattering comment by an important scientist, an old fellow worker of his. The boys had catalogues of guns and fishing tackle to look at, Wendo had a new consignment of paints, the Baby was given colored Sunday supplements, Mumsie and Papa went through a pile of letters each, and the meal was eaten in bites and snatches. Suddenly Papa looked up from a letter:

"Listen to this," he said.

Every one looked at him.

"Here's a letter from Joe," he addressed the

## WHY NOT WIN THIS PRIZE?

Princess, "sending me word of a ten thousand dollar prize being offered for a novel. He tells me there's no reason on earth why I shouldn't win it. I've got two month's to write it in, which is rather short, but I'd hate to lose ten thousand dollars for so absurd a reason. I think, on the whole, I'll win this prize. Let's get through this meal so I can begin."

He drew a piece of berry pie toward him and set to work on it with enthusiasm. He liked berry pie. No one spoke. They all sat as though paralyzed. Presently he resumed:

"Ten thousand dollars is exactly what we need. I'll buy that banana plantation, Byron, and make a fortune with it. Or perhaps we'll all go down to Yucatan with you when you return there. Or both. I understand that all you do with a banana plantation is to let the bananas get full, load them on the heads of nigger women and send them down the mountain. Talk about bonnets, there's a kind a man can enthuse over!"

"Bully idea," agreed Lord Byron. "And this novel? Got an idea for that?"

"Oddly enough, I have been disturbed lately with the notion of a story that ought to do. And as it appears likely that this rain is going to last at least another couple of months, why, all things

## ISLAND FARM

work together for good." And Papa grinned broadly round upon them all.

The Princess got up and walked round the table to lean over Papa and read the letter he still held open in his hand. She confirmed his statement.

"There really is a prize of ten thousand offered. And even if you don't win the prize I see they may publish several of the novels submitted, and you might get the book published, at least."

"But, Mumsie, don't you think he'll win the prize?" asked Wendo, anxiety in her voice.

The grown-ups laughed.

"There you go, trying to destroy the faith of my trusting children in their father," accused Papa. "Of course I'll win it, Wendo. Who would be likely to, if not I? Have you ever known me to fail in anything I undertook?"

"Well," Enley observed, hesitatingly, "you said we'd make a fortune here, and we haven't. Deedah says we're ruined."

"Not ruined, my boy, merely broke," his father replied gleefully. "And what, after all, is more inspiring? Suppose, for instance, that we had made, or were making, that fortune. I should then turn away from this prize offer, and a great story would be lost to the world. But, as it is, I am filled with ideas and energy."

## WHY NOT WIN THIS PRIZE?

There was a good deal in what Papa said. The children felt it. Weren't they, too, filled with energy and ideas? They grinned at each other. The Baby, feeling the time propitious, called out loudly, "More pie, more pie, please," and the Princess absent-mindedly put a slice on her extended plate which the Baby lost not a second in attacking. And now Alice, who had sat mute, her eyes turning from one to another, presented an inquiry:

"How much is ten thousand dollars?"

"It's about two thousand pounds, Alice," Papa told her, "speaking in the dull language of the bankers. But, by a truer measurer, it's El Dorado, and the Lost Mine and Fairy Gold."

"Thank you," returned Alice, in her precise, pretty way. "Then it's a kind of fairy tale." And none of the children knew why the grown-ups laughed at that.

Altogether it was a fine, successful, unusual day, even if the rain did keep falling.

## CHAPTER XIII

### MR. BRANDON-SMITH DISAPPEARS

**T**HE time had come for Alice to go back home and the Princess received a note from her father that he would ride past Eureka Pen on Thursday on his way down to the port where he had business he must attend to. And that he would return Friday, rather late, and could he spend the night and take Alice back with him Saturday. The Princess sent back word with the messenger who brought the note that of course he could, but that if it were possible, to arrange matters so that he could stay till Monday, which would round the week out.

No one knew just when he would arrive, and as Thursday was once again fair, the family was scattered in a dozen directions when he rode in. Papa was in his study, already hard at work on the Ten Thousand Dollar Novel, as every one called it. Wendo was painting a view down in the little cañon, with Treachy and Alice near her, occasionally watching her laying the colors on in

nice thick strokes, the rest of the time murmuring to each other over some secret of their own that involved heaps of giggling. Deedah was also buried in her art, writing at a poem that appeared to be giving her real pain, to judge from the way she gnawed at her pencil and scowled into the distance from the corner of the veranda where she was sitting. The Baby, who had taken a passionate liking to Lord Byron, was walking beside him, hand clasped in hand, as he strolled back and forth smoking between the stable yard and the garden. She talked steadily, discussing the possibilities of his spending the remainder of his life near her:

“Couldn’t you be my second Papa? If you were my second Papa then you wouldn’t need to go away and you could live here all the time and play with me. I wish you were my Papa too, as well as Papa is,” was the slightly involved way she put it.

“I’d like immensely to be your Papa, but people never have but one real Papa, and you wouldn’t like to have me just for an unreal Papa, would you?”

“Well, we could pretend you were real,” said the Baby.



"Perhaps we might try that," Lord Byron agreed, and so it was arranged.

Down in the artichoke patch Enley and Zack stood almost hidden by the huge prickly plants, whose thistle heads bent this way and that, some in gorgeous purple flower. Both boys were busy gathering the heads that were ready to eat, as a new load of produce was to be sent to town next day. The Princess stood at the edge of the patch, watching them, and occasionally calling something to them. As for Charles, he was humming and buzzing as he always did when grooming the horses, and Sadie and the old cook sat together in the shade in front of the kitchen, washing and cutting up yams.

Mr. Brandon-Smith reached the veranda and pulled at the cord attached to a large bell. At its heavy ding-dong the family began to gather, the children coming at top speed, the older persons more slowly. As soon as Alice saw who it was she screeched delightedly, hurrying to throw herself into her father's arms, he dismounting just in time to catch her as she rushed up. He gave her a great hug and then set her back on the ground, laughing and flushed.

"Can you stop till Monday?" came the chorus from the children as they arrived. "You see,"

## MR. BRANDON-SMITH DISAPPEARS

explained Deedah, "we're going to have charades Sunday evening and we simply must have Alice here to do them with us."

"Why, I think so," returned Mr. Brandon-Smith. He greeted the Princess smiling, adding:

"I wonder whether you'll lend me one of your little girls to go back with Alice. It would be splendid if you would."

The Princess looked doubtful:

"Why . . . none of them has ever been away from home . . . but if you don't mind risking having a homesick young one on your hands. . . ."

"I'll go. . . . I'll just love to go," cried Treachy breathlessly. "Alice and I have started a beautiful secret, and if I go to her place we can go right on with it. Can't we, Ally?"

"Oh, yes! Do let her come with me, Princess." Alice was thrilled, radiant. "Treachy won't be homesick if she's with me, really."

"Well, all right," agreed the Princess, upon which Treachy gave a wild whoop and began to dance a double shuffle. "You see what you're in for," commented Mumsie, smiling, but Mr. Brandon-Smith only nodded, with an amused grin. Evidently he liked whoops and shuffles.

Just here the Baby arrived, leading Lord Byron by the hand.

"This is my new Papa, and I love him," she said. Mr. Brandon-Smith looked a trifle bewildered, so did the Princess. Lord Byron laughing, started to explain, when he stopped suddenly, his eyes on the newcomer:

"By Jove, we've met before, haven't we?" he remarked, stepping up closer with extended hand. "I can't quite remember the occasion. . . ." He stopped again, hesitating before Brandon-Smith's evident astonishment, and concluded with a brief "Beg pardon, awfully silly of me, but I mixed you up with . . . one of those queer resemblances . . ." he stopped talking, the two shook hands while the Princess mentioned their names, and Papa coming out, led them up the veranda, where the men settled down for a smoke and chat for the short time Brandon-Smith could stay.

The youngsters sat down on the top step, while Charles led the horse away, to discuss Treachy's visit.

"Maybe some of the rest of you'd like to go," Treachy said, "but I just couldn't help busting out when I heard Alice's father asking for one of us girls, because you know she and I've just got

started on this perfectly wonderful secret, and we didn't know what we'd do about it when she went away. . . ."

"That's all right," answered Deedah. "I've got to keep on working at this poem I've thought of, and Wendo means to finish her picture, so we couldn't very well have gone. You see Wendo an' I are simply determined to get to America, and we're going to try to get some money to go with. Wendo might sell some of her paintings, and I'll sell some more poems sure. She . . ."

"I'm going to go to art school," interrupted Wendo. "Even when Papa wins this ten thousand dollars of his, if he stays here on a banana plantation what good'll that do me? No art schools here."

Zack nodded at this.

"There's no use trying to persuade him and Mumsie to go back, I guess," he agreed, "and then we don't know, maybe he'll never win this prize after all. Lots of other people are trying to get it too. We'd better go ahead planning how to get back there and take no chance of gettin' left."

"That's right," from Enley. "America for us, and especially the great boundless West." He sighed deeply.

## ISLAND FARM

Papa called to Charles to bring up the horse again, and the grown-ups came laughing and chatting to the steps. As Charles arrived, Brandon-Smith pulled something out of a pocket, and turning, showed it to Papa:

"I found that interesting little object hanging at the head of my bed this morning," he announced. "What d'you make of it?"

Papa took it and looked at it curiously, the rest crowding close to see. It was a small bundle of fur, feathers, the claw of a bird and some tiny white bones, curiously bound together with scarlet thread.

Enley made a smothered sound, and looked at Deedah. The thing was much like the one they had found at the sink hole a couple of weeks or more ago.

"Ha, that's a voodoo charm!" exclaimed Lord Byron, interestedly. "I've heard that obeah worship lingers on in these hills. Have the blacks anything against you?" He looked at Brandon-Smith.

"I've jolly well spoiled a number of their little games for them," the Englishman returned. "The impudence of the beggars, mind you, hanging this thing to my very bed. Not one of the servants would admit to knowing a thing about it. Yes,

it's a voodoo sign, right enough. And I think I can guess who's at the bottom of it." His face looked grim.

Charles, his eyes goggling, was staring at the little bunch of queer objects, and as Brandon-Smith mounted he muttered anxiously:

"La, Massa Buckra, better go mighty keerful or duppie sure do you harm, la! Bad luck carry that round," and he nodded fearfully at the charm which Brandon-Smith was stuffing back into his pocket.

"It'll be bad luck for some one, but I rather think it won't be me. Well," he lifted his hat to the group on the veranda, "I'll be off. I'll get away early to-morrow morning and you can look for me round lunch time." He clucked to his horse and rode off.

"Takes it easier than I would," remarked Lord Byron, looking after him. "You can't reckon with these superstitious notions as you can with ordinary beliefs and ideas. These spell-casters have a confidence in their own invulnerability that occasionally works out dangerously. Brandon-Smith, eh? I don't remember any such name, yet I'll swear I've seen him somewhere. . . . How long has he lived here, if you happen to know?"

## ISLAND FARM

“About eleven or twelve years, I believe. You may have run across him in London.”

“I’ve probably got some one else in mind . . . but there’s some sort of hazy impression. . . . Well, maybe it’ll come to me when I see him to-morrow.”

“Day after to-morrow I’m going visiting,” chanted Treachy. “Oh what larks, eh, Ally?” and the two went off together giggling joyously.

However, as it turned out, neither Lord Byron nor Treachy were to do what they expected to do.

They decided to have the charades that same evening, since Mumsie said she would send them early to bed Sunday night, for Treachy and the Brandon-Smiths were to make a very early start Monday morning.

Jingoes, what fun they had! There was the scene where Papa and Lord Byron took the part of two pirates, splendidly clad in large top boots, scarlet sashes, cloaks, red handkerchiefs round their heads, and Papa had huge brass curtain rings tied to his ears, while Lord Byron had a black patch over one eye. They were supposed to be marooned on a tiny atoll in the south seas, represented by a rug in the middle of the floor. They took turns walking slowly round and round



## MR. BRANDON-SMITH DISAPPEARS

the islet, shading their eyes with their hands, bending and crouching and glaring into the distance, and muttering to each other in deep husky voices, "Black Dick, what'ye see," or "Cut-Throat Bill, nowt but the sea." Of course, it was easy to guess that syllable, and the audience roared "Sea, sea, sea," as they walked off behind the large Japanese screen that served as a dressing room.

Another excellent bit was where Treachy came in riding Enley, on all fours. She rode into the middle of the room, dismounted, hobbled Enley's front feet, made a pretend fire with bits of wood and started supper in an old frying pan, while Enley grazed round and snorted. Suddenly Zack and Wendo, with two wooly doormats tied round them, came in also on all fours, and began to circle round and round, howling dismally. Treachy kept begging her horse, whom she called "Old Pal," not to get "skeered," and at last rolled herself in a blanket and lay down, remarking, "Well, Old Pal, guess I'll have to sleep with one eye open." That syllable was *I*, but every one thought it was pal, so they didn't guess the word.

The fun kept up till ten, even the Baby appearing in a scene where she had to cry, which she did lustily, and then when Deedah, in the character

## ISLAND FARM

of her mother, tried to soothe her, saying she mustn't cry like that, Baby stopped with a great air of surprise and remarked in a clear voice, "*But you told me to.*" That made every one laugh and brought the scene to an end.

When the charades were over they had chocolate cake and orange and pineapple squash and at last went to bed still talking steadily.

Next morning the Brandon-Smith's coachman drove in with the carriage that was to take the girls to Lost Pen next day. He asked to speak to Alice, and the two could be seen in earnest confab for some moments. When Alice came back on the veranda, where the family was gathered in Sunday idleness, she looked disturbed.

"Anything wrong, Alice?" asked the Princess.

"N-no. Not exactly. Duke just told me that last night there was a duppie screaming round the house, and he says that means trouble. You know how the blacks are . . . only people do say that those screams and yells may be made by niggers under the spell of voodoo. . . . I wish Papa were back."

"Well, he'll come soon now, dear. Don't worry. The voodoo and the duppies together will hardly

## MR. BRANDON-SMITH DISAPPEARS

harm you or your father. And you have good<sup>ers</sup> reliable servants, haven't you?"

Alice said they had, and looked cheered up again. The morning went by quickly, for there were a lot of last things to be done before Alice and Treachy should depart next morning, good-bys to be said to favorite spots, the brook to be paddled in, a book to finish. Lunch hour came—but as yet Mr. Brandon-Smith had not arrived.

Sadie came to Deedah, who was housekeeper that week and asked:

"Wait lunch time for Massa Brannon-Simmit, Missie?"

"I guess we'd better wait a little, Sadie. He's sure to be along in a few minutes."

Sadie looked oddly at Deedah, shook her head, and departed.

Time went on. The family began to collect, Papa coming from his study last of all. He was working so hard at the novel now that sometimes he didn't come to lunch at all. No one disturbed him if he chose to go on working.

"Well, what about eats?" he demanded. "I've finished a corking chapter, and I want nourishment."

The Princess explained that they were expecting Mr. Brandon-Smith, but that something had

## ISLAND FARM

of            ntly detained him. "Just tell Sadie not to  
any longer," she said to Deedah.

So presently they all sat down, and talk went on much as usual. Still, there was a perceptible sense of strain. Alice, big-eyed, looked from one to another, but each and all kept a bright, cheerful expression and a ready grin. Lord Byron talked about Yucatan, describing a city that had been found buried in the jungle, a strange great place where enormous carved gods sat facing each other across what once was a vast square, and where palaces were supported on carved stone pillars like the serried ranks of a forest.

"An amazing civilization it was," he remarked. "You can't think how curious, how uncanny it is, to wander round among those immensities, work of a race whose history has vanished, stared at by those grim gods of a religion dead lord knows how many centuries. You can't get the Indians to go anywhere near the place—they say it's haunted, of course."

Luncheon ended, and cleared away by Sadie, who muttered that "Mas' Brannon-Simmit too ter'able long while on road," to which remark no one made a reply, the afternoon began to drag. Tea time arrived, and now there was no use pretending that all of them were not anxious. The

## ALARUMS AND EXCURSIONS

During the morning three different members of the searching party rode in to see if there were any news and to leave reports. Only there was nothing to report. No signs of any struggle, no one who had heard a shout, an appeal for help, or seen the vanished man, though there had been quite a number of travelers on the highroad during the day on which Mr. Brandon-Smith had left for town.

“Seems as though the gentleman had just gone clean off the island,” remarked one of the men. “He knows this country too well to’ve got himself lost, and he ain’t likely to have gone visitin’ any of these blacks. . . . There ain’t no way of accountin’ for it . . .” with which he rode off.

After luncheon, a patchy meal eaten in snatches, for every one was too restless to sit still, the Princess took Alice into her room and gave her a very mild drink of bromide, for the child was rapidly getting into an hysterical state, trembling feverishly, with flushed cheeks and eyes abnormally bright, while occasionally a long sob shuddered through her. Soon she was sleeping uneasily. The Baby too, was put to bed, protesting, but the Princess insisted.

## ISLAND FARM

The five remaining young ones went off together to talk matters over.

"Do you think he's dead?" Wendo almost whispered the question.

"I was just talking to Charley and Duke," Zack stated. "They says he's been 'withered away' by a spell. Say no one'll ever see him again, 'less he comes back as a haunt."

There was a silence.

"Of course that's all bosh," said Deedah. "All this spell business. But suppose he never does come back!"

"Maybe one of the men'll find his dead body, anyhow," Treachy contributed thoughtfully. "Poor Alice. . . ."

"If those voodoo niggers do kill him," said Enley, "they'll of course hide him—maybe they'll put his body down one of those sink holes."

"I've never seen one of those places," said Zack. "I wonder how big they are?"

"My goodness, Enley," broke in Deedah, "perhaps they put him down that one you and I saw near the big silkcotton."

Enley jumped to his feet, his eyes blazing with sudden excitement, his thick blond hair fairly bristling.

"I'll bet that's exactly what they have done!

## ALARUMS AND EXCURSIONS

Zack, you remember I told you 'bout that hole Deedah an' I found, and how the old obeah woman came out on us. We thought that was a sink hole. Gee whiz! S'pose he is down that place. . . ."

"How'd they get him over there?" asked Zack briefly.

The children, who had all surged forward at Enley's suggestion, sank back.

"Yes, how'd they get him there?" they repeated. "It's the opposite way."

But Enley was not discouraged.

"Of course something's happened that it doesn't seem possibly could happen," he made reply, "or else he wouldn't have vanished."

"That's true anyhow," agreed Deedah. "Maybe he saw something exciting in that direction when he got to the highroad, and so just turned that way for a bit, and something happened."

"Maybe there *are* duppies after all," suggested Treachy, "and one of 'em did get hold of him and dragged him. We can't be absolutely sure there aren't any, any more than we can be absolutely sure there aren't any ghosts."

"Shucks, there are just's many duppies as there are ghosts," scoffed Zack, "and that's none."

"Anyway, I think we ought to go to that place



## ISLAND FARM

and see if maybe he *is* there," asserted Enley firmly.

"Gosh!" and Zack also leapt to his feet. "Let's. But how'll we get there? Mumsie'd never let us go, that's sure."

There was a silence, while they thought the problem over. Then Deedah suggested that they get Charles to saddle Tavi and Tikki and take them round to the gate at the foot of the road.

"You can get on there and ride right over. It won't take much more'n an hour to go and come if you go fast."

The idea was voted a good one, and they started at once to put it into progress. Wendo thought it would be worth while to take a rope and lantern along, and some sandwiches, to let down into the hole if Mr. Brandon-Smith were there. "He'll be fearfully hungry," she said, for tacitly they all took the attitude that should he be there he would be alive.

"All the same," muttered Treachy, "I wouldn't go for a hundred million dollars!"

"I'd hate to go alone," Zack agreed. "But it's not so scary if there're two of you. And s'pose we should find him, maybe starving to death or something!"

They didn't tell Charles what they had in mind,

## ALARUMS AND EXCURSIONS

simply saying they were going to join in the search. The girls procured the lantern, rope and sandwiches, and Enley got the rifle. Deedah added a bottle of water. It was all terribly thrilling. They met at the gate with their various supplies, the boys mounted, waved a good-by, and galloped off.

“This is the most awfully wonderful day in our whole life,” Treachy asserted, as the girls walked slowly back to the house. “Hallo, there comes one of the soldiers! Maybe he’s got some news.”

They hastened to join him, but there was nothing new.

“It’s rough going in that country,” the man said, “and it ain’t nowise likely we’ll bring him in ’fore nightfall now. He ain’t close by, that’s certain sure.”

“Shsh,” warned the Princess. “His little girl’s asleep, and I don’t want her to wake for hours, she’s utterly worn out, poor mite. It’s very terrible. Won’t you have some tea, Sergeant?”

The Sergeant accepted a cup and ate a few sandwiches. He asked whether there was a gun on the place, and said it would be a good idea, should any definite news arrive, to fire off a series of shots as a signal.

## ISLAND FARM

“There’s a lot of niggers huntin’ with us, an’ one o’ them might come in with news.”

The Princess told him she’d see that it was done, and told Deedah to find the boys and tell them. Deedah murmured a vague reply, and the constable rode away again.

Once again the grim business of waiting.

“I can only take little short breaths at the very top of my stomach,” Wendo confided to her sisters.

Meanwhile Enley and Zack tore along the winding road that led to the huge ceiba tree which marked the entrance of the trail that led to the sink hole. Reaching the place, they dismounted, tied their horses securely, took rifle, rope, lantern and provisions, and after a careful look round to be sure there were no signs of him they sought, they set off down the trail, plunging at once into the silence and darkness of the forest.

They kept close together, saying nothing, eyes and ears alert for any unusual sound or sight.

The way seemed longer than Enley remembered, probably because he was so wrought up. Presently however the sharp dip toward the big hole began. The brothers stopped.

“There might be some one down there on the

## ALARUMS AND EXCURSIONS

lookout," whispered Enley. "It's just a few steps now. Better be ready with the gun."

Zack nodded, shifting the rifle so that it lay across his chest, his finger on the trigger. They moved cautiously forward. It was very gloomy here, the trees making an almost impenetrable mass overhead through which scarcely any light filtered. Yet suddenly Enley laid a hand on Zack's arm. His quick eye had caught something. Stepping to one side, he pulled it from a clump of thick fern.

"Look!" he almost gasped.

It was a riding crop. More than that, it was the one Mr. Brandon-Smith usually carried, and which had been admired by the children, because of the ivory head, cleverly carved to represent an English bulldog.

The boys drew a long, difficult breath. Here was confirmation, and it wasn't strange that a tremor shook them. What were they on the point of discovering? The silence was a threat in itself, of which death seemed to be the sole explanation.

They pushed on, Zack closely gripping his rifle, Enley a step behind. In a moment they saw the whitish glimmer of the edge of the hole, and reached the margin a second later.

Instantly they saw that something had hap-

## ISLAND FARM

pened here, though now the spot was utterly deserted. But the earth near the edge of the cavity was scratched and torn, a broken liana swung over into the darkness, and on the jutting rock, still smoking, lay a great pile of ashes.

"He's down there," muttered Enley, and put a hand to his throat to control its heavy throbbing as the blood pounded upward from his heart. Zack made no reply, but crept close to the edge and stared fearfully down into the blackness. In the greenish shadow the faces of the two showed deathly white.

Enley, kneeling on the ground, lighted the lantern, already attached to its rope. He fastened the other end round a tree close to the hole.

They began silently to lower the small light into the gaping darkness.

As the light went down slowly, they peered over the edge. The broken walls looked pallid, except where vines swung down over them, or small plants grew rankly in the crevices. There were dark openings, too, and small sharp ledges. Down, down went the swinging light, revealing a backward sloping wall. Suddenly it landed. At first the boys thought it had reached the bottom of the hole, but they soon saw that it stood on what was

## ALARUMS AND EXCURSIONS

merely a much larger ledge. Below the hole plunged on, to new depths.

Both were flat on their stomachs, staring down into the swaying lights and shadows, that gave a queer look of life and movement to the jagged rocks and clinging green stuff. Zack, who was manipulating the rope, tried to swing it so that the lantern would descend into the deeper part of the hole. Suddenly he gave a choking gasp.

"Look!" he said.

"Oh, God," exclaimed Enley, and trembled.

"It's him all right," responded Zack, more calmly. "We've got him."

The light fell on a lot of scattered debris mixed in with which was the figure of a man. It lay motionless, one arm flung across the face, the other hanging over the precipitous descent. Even in the dim light it was easy to make out the checked pattern of the breeches worn by the lost man. Zack swung the light carefully till he brought it to rest close to the still shape.

"He's dead," said Enley. "What'll we do?"

Petrified with horror, they lay rigid, staring down.

Then there came a hoarse whisper from Enley:

"Gosh, Zack—isn't—Isn't his hand moving?"

Either the flickering light betrayed them, or the

## ISLAND FARM

figure had moved slightly, stirred the arm over its face. The boys seemed to be turned into sheer sight. Again there was a faint movement; this time they could not be mistaken! Zack, summoning all his laboring breath, gave a hoarse shout.

For a time there was no response. He tried again, again. Then the arm was dragged downward, exposing a pale face. Zack, pulling at the rope, swung the lantern over the man's body. "Hi-hi!" he yelled.

The head moved uneasily, and once again the arm was thrown across the face below them. But the boys were now recovered from their tension, and they kept up a good yelling, swinging the light at the same time.

Reward came. Supporting himself painfully on one arm, the man roused, stared up at them, and the two heard a groan break from him.

"It's all right now," Enley called down, almost a sob in his voice. "We've found you, and soon we'll get you out. Just wait a minute, we'll send you down something to eat and drink."

The figure, making no reply, once again sank back and lay motionless. Quickly they hauled up the lantern, then attaching the package of food and the bottle of water, let all down together. As it struck the ledge Zack called down:



## ALARUMS AND EXCURSIONS

“Eat those, please. Don’t die now!”

The plea seemed to rouse Mr. Brandon-Smith, for he stirred again, and finally got into a sitting posture, reaching for the package with a feeble, groping movement. They watched as he undid it slowly, and began to drink from the bottle.

“He’s nearly gone,” Zack murmured. “Tell you what, the thing to do is to get people here as soon as possible. I’ll fire the rifle off, to attract them, and one of us had better go back to the silk-cotton and wait till some one comes and then lead them here quick.”

“All right. I’ll stay,” said Enley.

“Here goes,” said Zack. He leaped up, and fired the arm three times at spaced intervals. They waited. From the distance came an answer . . . one, two, three! Again Zack fired. Then, reloading, he handed the gun to his brother.

“You might need it,” he said, and sped off up the trail.

The rustle of Zack’s departure over, Enley leaned back against a tree near the hole, his rifle held easily in his hands, prepared to wait for the rescuing party. The uncanny place, the dim light, and the knowledge that down there in the depths of the earth lay a man who might be dying, did

## ISLAND FARM

not make the vigil particularly pleasant. Enley, indeed, felt scared. But he despised the feeling.

Carelessly lifting his eyes to the rock, however, he felt the clutch of real terror. For there, cross-legged beside the still-warm ashes, her burning eyes fixed upon him, her chin supported on her hands, sat the old obeah woman.

## CHAPTER XV

### LORD BYRON SCENTS A MYSTERY

PAPA, Lord Byron, and a constable were riding slowly back to Eureka and had just turned in at the gate when Zack's three shots rang out their deliberate signal. All three drew rein sharply. The sound came from an unexpected direction, but it must mean something definite.

"There's news over there," exclaimed Papa. "What do you say to making straight for that point, officer?" and with the words he turned his horse and loped swiftly back to the highroad and then, followed closely by his two companions, lickety-split up the road toward the trail. In a very brief time they came pounding up the hill to the ceiba tree, where Zack stood, waving excitedly. As soon as they drew close to him he called out:

"He's here—we've found him, and he's alive. But hurry."

"Here—where?" asked Papa, as the three men leaped from their horses and stared about them.

## ISLAND FARM

They tied their horses while Zack explained that they must run down the trail. As they sped forward Zack gasped out in a few words the essentials of the discovery:

“Enley’s there waitin’ for us . . . it’s just round the corner now. . . .”

He was interrupted by a sudden high screeching, followed the next instant by a shot.

“Good God,” gasped Papa, with a constriction of the heart, for what might not be afoot there ahead of them, where Enley guarded alone the fearful chasm at whose foot lay a man, probably a dying man.

Papa and his companions were not the only ones who had heard Zack’s signal, and from all around the searching party came riding into Eureka Pen. Mumsie, pale but calm, answered their hasty questions and Deedah and Wendo directed them, from the gate, as to the direction to go. Alice stood with her hand clasped tightly in that of the Princess, white, big-eyed, tears running disregarded down her cheeks. Everything was stir and bustle, the flash of accouterments, the galloping of horses, the calls and shouts of arriving and departing men.

“My gosh! They’ve certainly found him,”

## LORD BYRON SCENTS A MYSTERY

panted Treachy, coming to join her sisters at the gate. "But maybe he's dead!"

"We'll know soon," returned Deedah. "Oh, dear, I hope he's all right! Hallo, what's that?"

It was the same single shot that had startled Papa.

Zack was in the lead, and he came flying down the slope to the sink hole as if he were on wings. Behind him thundered the three men. There stood Enley, the gun still smoking in his hands, his head thrown back. He whirled at the sound of feet:

"She's—she's gone!" he cried.

The newcomers surrounded him. Papa asked anxiously:

"Aren't hurt, eh? What were you shooting at?"

"I didn't shoot her, I shot over her, but she just tumbled out of sight. I had to, she was going to throw that rock down and I knew it would kill him . . ." he gave a dry sob and turned his head brusquely.

Papa thumped him on the shoulder.

"All right, old man," he said. "And now, where's Brandon-Smith?"

## ISLAND FARM

But already Zack and the constable were peering down the hole. The man jumped up.

“We’ll have to get down there,” he said. “I think this rope will hold me.” He pulled at the boys’ rope, reknotted it more securely, and cautiously let himself down over the edge, the rope twisted once round his leg. The rest watched him as he slowly let himself down. In a few seconds he reached the shelf on which the injured and unconscious man lay, and was bending over him. Then he called up.

“He’s fainted, but he’s alive. We’ll have to get a sling and haul him up. One of his legs is broke.”

Two new men now came trotting on the scene, soon to be followed by others. The little plateau in front of the sink hole was an animated place, with rifles stacked at the back and men crowded to the very edge. Several of these were set to work at cutting a path round the hole to see what had become of the old woman Enley had fired at. Others set to work making a rope sling. Zack and Enley breathlessly related, in eager snatches, how they had come to the place and made the discovery. Men shouted down to the constable in the hole, he shouted back. There was much struggle with the adjusting of the sling. A stout little tree was

## LORD BYRON SCENTS A MYSTERY

cut down and braced over the cavern, the pulley ropes slung over it, and by degrees and as carefully as possible the inert body of the Englishman was hauled up and drawn out to solid earth. The broken leg had received first-aid and was roughly bandaged. As the toiling group laid their burden on the ground he groaned, opening his eyes.

“Did you—get—any of the devils?” he gasped out.

“Not yet, but we’ve got you,” Papa answered. “We’ll have you comfortable in no time now.”

While the men were getting Brandon-Smith out of the sink hole messengers had been sent off for a carriage, for a doctor, for stimulants. A litter was made that would suffice to get him to the head of the trail and the procession prepared to start. The men who were cutting a path to the jutting rock had reached it and were scrabbling over and behind it. One of them called out, saying that there was a subterranean passage leading back from it, but no trace of the old woman or any one else. The captain of the troop, who had arrived among the last comers, decided to lead a body of his men to explore this tunnel and seek to capture any of the blacks who might be near or in it.

“You get Mr. Brandon-Smith to Eureka Pen,” he directed part of his men, “while we make a try



## ISLAND FARM

for these fellows. Then go back to headquarters and make your report." He saluted and pushed his way along the narrow path cut round the hole.

"Go on ahead and tell Mumsie we're on the way," Papa directed the boys. "She'll know what to do. The sooner this man gets to bed the better. We'll stick with him."

The boys hastened back to their horses and galloped ahead of the cavalcade. They met the carriage coming, waved a signal of confidence, and soon swept up the drive to the veranda. Every one was collected there, including the servants. Charles rushed down to take the horses, bursting with utterly unintelligible remarks, and the boys tumbled up the steps to tell their tale.

It was nearly an hour before the carriage arrived, and before that everything had been prepared for the victim of the assault. He was carried in and laid down on a couch where Lord Byron and one of the constabulary undressed him, gave him a hot swab and put him into clean pajamas, with one leg slit so that his broken bone could be treated. He had several severe bruises and a bad cut at the back of his head, but so far as could be discovered that was all. During the operation of making him more comfortable he recovered consciousness and even joked feebly:

## LORD BYRON SCENTS A MYSTERY

“Smashed my watch, like a bally ass,” he muttered. “How long was I mislaid?”

He smiled at Alice, as she kissed him. “Good girl,” he said, when she declared “I didn’t cry *much*, Papa,” and then his eyes closed once more.

Gradually the various men left and Eureka returned to comparative calm. The doctor would arrive toward ten o’clock. Till then everything that could be done to make the sufferer more comfortable had been attended too. He had eaten a little hot bouillon with an egg stirred into it and seemed to be sleeping.

Exhausted by the events and the excitement of the day the family gathered round the supper table at eight o’clock. The boys had told every detail of their share in the rescue before this, but they told it again, explaining how they happened to think of the place:

“It was Deedah,” said Enley. “She remembered how we’d seen the obeah woman there that day we went picnicking. . . . I wonder whether they’ll catch her?”

“Maybe you hit her when you fired?” suggested Zack eagerly.

“No, I just wanted to scare her, and I fired high into the air. But jingo, I was scared!”

“I wonder how they ever got him to the place?”

## ISLAND FARM

remarked Lord Byron. "Nothing to take him there of his own free will, and yet to drag him all that way in broad daylight. . . ."

"Yes, that's a puzzle that'll have to wait till he can tell us. There's something queer there. Well, this living on the edge of the Middle Ages has its drawbacks. I'm not sure I want any more of it." From Papa.

"I thought shooting those three pigs with one shot was pretty exciting," put in Zack reflectively, "but gosh, that's nothing to this day!"

"I could swear I've met him before," Lord Byron told Papa, later, as they sat smoking on the veranda, waiting the arrival of the doctor. The children had been sent to bed very soon after supper, and had dropped asleep almost immediately. "There's something oddly familiar about him. But if I have, then this name of his isn't his own, and there's a jolly old mystery tied up with him somehow."

"There's something unexplained about the man," observed Papa. "A man of his type doesn't belong in a backwater like this. We've felt it from the first."

"It's his own business. But—I wonder," and Lord Byron sank into thought.

The doctor came and after an examination de-

## LORD BYRON SCENTS A MYSTERY

clared there were no internal injuries. He set the leg with Lord Byron's help, for the visitor from Yucatan had had a lot of practice with first aid, learnt in the life he had led far from civilization.

"As soon as he's recovered from the shock to his nerves and the exhaustion induced by the long exposure, he'll pick up quickly. Luckily it's a simple fracture, just above the ankle and ought not to give us much trouble. He's had the deuce of a narrow squeak, though. Those boys of yours, from what I hear, did a fine piece of work."

Papa nodded. "They seem to have had a hunch, and they followed it," he said. "And now, doctor, we'll show you your room and turn in. It's been rather a trying day."

Mr. Brandon-Smith recovered his strength with amazing speed, while the fractured bone knit without trouble. He would be obliged to stay in bed for some time, or at least extended in one of the long chairs on the veranda, but he would suffer no permanent bad effects from his experience. The day after his rescue he slept most of the time, but on the next one he was able to tell the police how he had been attacked.

## ISLAND FARM

“They trapped me,” he explained, “and baited the trap with a child. Just as I struck the high-road after leaving this place and turned toward the town I heard a sharp scream of pain behind me. I stopped, listened, and it came again, a child’s scream. I thought at once that those voodoo devotees were up to some mischief, and I turned back and rode cautiously along the road in the direction of the cry. Presently I heard another yell. The screams were some distance off, and I suddenly remembered that there was some voodoo meeting place up the road. I kept on, now losing the sound of the crying child, now getting a fresh dose of it. Evidently the child was being carried swiftly ahead of me. The short of the matter was that I finally reached that ceiba tree, dismounted and scrambled down the trail, for there was no mistaking where the screams came from then . . . heart-wrenching, they were.

“When I reached the sink hole that old fiend was standing on the rock over it with a child in her hands, hanging quite still. She set up a yowl when she saw me, and made to pitch the little thing into the hole. I gave a yell, and sprang to the edge of the infernal place, with some sort of notion that I might be able to catch the body if

## LORD BYRON SCENTS A MYSTERY

she did hurl it down, and the first thing I knew there was a stir behind me, and the next moment they'd shoved me over. . . . By a piece of good luck I caught a liana as I went that broke my fall and swung me over so that I landed on a ledge instead of going the whole way . . . and there I was. I knew I'd cracked my leg, and I felt pretty well smashed up, but I didn't lose consciousness then. Most hellish racket broke out above me, like a lot of devils straight from hell. Probably I fainted later, for the next thing I knew was that I was looking up at a lot of stars, and absolute silence surrounded me. . . ."

"Thought they'd got rid of you without a trace," mused the constable. "And it was a chance, our finding you. If it hadn't been for the two boys, blessed if I think we ever would've. Nothing to take us in that direction, you know. Well, we've run through the passage that leads back from the rock, and found a lot of their nasty hocus-pocus stuff there, but nothing of any of them. Bound to get 'em, however, and they know it. Thanks, sir, I'll be off now."

Life returned to normal ways at Eureka, accommodating itself easily enough to the invalid. Papa went back to working six hours a day on the Ten Thousand Dollar Novel, the boys re-

## ISLAND FARM

sumed their struggle with the farm, saving such of the vegetables as the long rainy season hadn't rotted in the ground, and selling them in the town to several agencies for what they would bring. A letter from Cousin Frank had come some time earlier saying that the markets he had found would not handle the stuff if there was no surety of getting it on time and at regular intervals. The scheme, in fact, was an impossible one.

"You're too far away to do anything with perishable goods," Lord Byron explained to the Princess. "Not in a small way like this, anyhow. The freighters won't be bothered with small consignments. Go into bananas and you'll make money."

"I'm not sure that this is a good place to stay in permanently," answered the Princess. "Well, we'll have to see."

Of course Brandon-Smith had insisted that the boys come to receive his thanks for saving his life. They were terribly embarrassed.

"Shucks," ejaculated Zack, and "It wasn't anything," muttered Enley.

"I wish you'd let me know if I can ever do anything for you," Mr. Brandon-Smith begged them. "Maybe there'll be a chance, and if there is let me know."



## LORD BYRON SCENTS A MYSTERY

The boys promised, shook hands, grinned and escaped. But later they returned to the subject, just between themselves.

"He might help us get back to the U. S. A.," suggested Enley. "He knows all those sea captains and ships, and maybe if he tells one of 'em to let us ship aboard as likely boys, they will."

"Gosh, that's an idea. As soon as he's well again we'll tackle him."

The girls, informed of the plan, were eagerly for it.

"Sure, he can get you on board as easy as nothing," declared Deedah. "And we've just got to get back there, all of us. I suppose maybe Pops and Mumsie'll be mad at first, but soon they'll get over it. If you get there, we will too."

Alice, admitted to these conclaves, was excited. She too wanted to leave the island hilltop. "Maybe now my father will go away," she said, "and then maybe I can be with you in America."

One evening the family, including the swiftly recuperating invalid, were grouped on the veranda after supper, the men smoking, the Princess telling the Baby, in her lap, a story about fairies and gnomes, the other children sunk into chairs or sitting on cushions on the floor, listening either to Mumsie or the men. Lord Byron was speak-

## ISLAND FARM

ing of a trip he had made to some queer buried place in Asia, and mentioned that he had been accompanied by a certain Tom Burlinghame.

“Tom Burlinghame?” interjected Mr. Brandon-Smith. “Great chap, that. What’s he up to now?”

“I think he’s in Africa. Yes, he’s top hole. Where did you know him?”

“He used to come to our place in Winchelsea now and then, between his expeditions. Spend a night or two, and then be off for a year or more. Queer chap, but one of the best.”

The talk swung off to other topics, and presently the Princess told the patient he must get back to bed.

“Doctor’s orders,” she insisted, while the delighted children giggled at his vain protests, so like their own. Their own turn came soon after, “But at least,” as Treachy said, “we don’t have to begin the business.”

When the Princess came back after making sure that all her progeny were safe for the night, she found the two men talking earnestly.

“Listen to this, Princess,” said Papa, pulling up a chair for her. “Byron’s got a line on Smith.”

“His speaking of Winchelsea was the clue,” de-

## LORD BYRON SCENTS A MYSTERY

clared Byron. "It's a small town on the Kentish coast, not far from Hastings. I spent a summer or two there . . . and I think I know why this man has always given me a queer feeling that we'd met before. If I'm right I think Brandon-Smith will be uncommonly glad to hear what I have to tell him."

"I know Winchelsea," said Papa. "Remember, Princess, we drove out there once from a little place where we were staying with friends, Dymchurch. Picturesque old town, haunt of pirates in old times. So he's from there, eh?"

"If what I fancy turns out to be the fact, he's very decidedly from there. I'll tackle him tomorrow. Won't tell you the story till I'm sure."

"That's where your canny Scot blood comes in," grunted Papa, for Lord Byron had a Highland strain.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE MYSTERY CLEARED UP

THERE was a heavy drizzle next morning, but Charles, who professed to be weather-wise, confided earnestly to Zack that this was the end:

"Him end of rain season," was his assurance. "To-night, you see, new moon come and rain go—go for a long time, la!"

So, hoping for the best, the family stayed indoors, occupied according to its diverse fancies. Treachy and Wendo were in a violent discussion as to the opposing merits of Alan Breck, Highland hero of Stevenson's *Kidnapped* and Monsieur Beaucair, Booth Tarkington's debonair prince. Wendo was all for Alan, Treachy for Beaucair, and honors seemed even. In one corner Zack was cleaning the rifle, whistling something he conceived to be "Marching Through Georgia," while Enley, bent double over a broken mongoose trap, was mending the thing with whacks of a hammer and rasps of a file. Deedah,

## THE MYSTERY CLEARED UP

her fingers in her ears, lay flat on the floor, her elbows supported on a cushion, studying a French lesson, and muttering in a monotonous singsong, "*Je sois, tu sois, il soit, nous soyons, vous soyez, ils soient.*" The Baby was teaching the parrot to say *gimme a banana* by dint of repeating the phrase over and over very distinctly and in a clear voice. The parrot's sole response was an occasional raucous screech.

Inside the storeroom the Princess and Sadie could be heard counting the linen, and from Papa's study came dimly the rattle of the typewriter. Alice alone was really quiet. Tongue in cheek and one leg crossed over the other, she sewed on a doll's dress.

Out on the veranda, on the protected side where the rain could not reach them, Lord Byron and Mr. Brandon-Smith sat together, smoking their pipes and watching the curtain of silver drops drift down from the gray skies.

"Speaking of Winchelsea," remarked Lord Byron presently, "did you happen to know Sir Bertram Alaston, of Alaston Manor?"

Brandon-Smith gave a slight start, turning his head quickly to fix his eyes on the scientist. For a moment he remained silent, then:

## ISLAND FARM

“Yes. I remember a family of that name. You—you know them?”

“I spent two summers at Winchelsea and came to know Bertram well. A tall thin chap, with a slight nervous affection. Met him at the golf club first, and in time we got rather intimate. He told me his story, and it was a queer one.”

Lord Byron paused, and glanced at Brandon-Smith. But the latter, staring out at the falling rain, made no sign.

“He was a lonely man, lived at the Manor with two servants, and seemed rather a recluse. Few people ever came there. He told me he'd been engaged to marry years ago, but that the engagement had been broken. His mother was dead, his father had died while he was a mere child. There was only one other member of the family left, a brother . . .” again there was a pause in the narrative, but no comment came from the invalid, and Byron continued:

“It was this brother who was the crux of the situation. He had been mixed up in an embezzling scheme and been forced to skip the country. I had already heard more or less of that scandal, without, to be sure, taking much interest in it. Been told that Bertram had devoted his entire resources to paying back the sum in question, but

## THE MYSTERY CLEARED UP

that the shock of his brother's disgrace had ruined his own life. . . . It was because of the disgrace to the name that he had broken off with the girl he loved, and from a young man only too devoted to the gay side of life had become the semi-hermit he now was.

“Well, one evening Bertram had asked me to dine with him. Afterwards we sat in his library, looking at some fine editions, for he was deeply interested in rare books. About ten I rose to go back to my hotel but he stopped me.

“‘Would you mind listening to something I want to tell you?’ he said. ‘It may take an hour or so.’ I nodded, and he rang for his man to bring whiskey and soda. We settled down, and after he'd kicked the fire together, for it was September and cool, he began to walk slowly back and forth, at first in silence. Suddenly he began speaking.

“It took some time in the telling, that story of his. But the gist of the matter was that it wasn't his brother, but he, who had done the embezzling. He'd got into a scrape, and mixed up with a gang of sharpers who ran him into debt. Had access to a certain sum of money belonging to a business associate, and . . . well, the temptation was too great. Thought, as most men do in the same



## ISLAND FARM

position, that he could replace the money before the deficit was discovered, had what he believed was a sure thing in a horse race, with the usual result.

“He was the older, but he had always been the more delicate and frail of the two brothers, and he was the apple of his mother’s eye. It would have killed her if she had known the truth. You can guess the rest, of course. Matters were arranged so that the blame could fall on his brother, who willingly sacrificed himself for the sake both of the family honor and his mother’s happiness. He was merely the younger brother, not the inheritor of the estate and the title. He could disappear and be forgotten. He did. For a while at least, under an assumed name, he lived in England, and Bertram heard he had married. Then he disappeared completely.”

Lord Byron stopped talking. During the silence that followed the noises of the house went cheerfully on, an undertone of happy life. At last Mr. Brandon-Smith lifted his head, and turned to the man beside him.

“How did you guess?” he asked quietly.

“There’s a strong family resemblance. And when you spoke of Winchelsea, the click came, and

## THE MYSTERY CLEARED UP

I knew why I'd had the sensation that we'd met before."

"It was one of those slips one makes unconsciously. Poor Bertram! I have cut myself off completely. No one but my lawyer, who handles my personal income, knows that I am alive. I get a communication from him once a year—it was that I was on my way to fetch when these blacks set upon me. He usually gives me a brief outline of family affairs at that time, but for some time now I have burnt the document unread. When a thing's done with, it had better be wiped out completely. I left England after the sudden death of my wife, who knew my secret, and understood my position. With her passing, I put England and all it held behind me forever."

"Not, I hope, forever," returned the other man. "Your brother is dead."

"Dead—Bertram dead? When, how?" Brandon-Smith broke into startled exclamation.

"I saw the account of it in the *London Times* at least four months ago. The thing was featured, because in his will was enclosed a confession of the whole affair, with a demand that a search should be made for you. You're Sir Brandon Alaston now, and it's up to you to go back and take up the responsibilities of the position."

## ISLAND FARM

There was another silence, broken at last by the new Sir Brandon:

"I suppose, for Alice's sake, I must," he said.

"For your brother's too. I know that it was his deepest wish."

Sir Brandon sighed. "Poor Bertram," he said again. "He ought to have married Sylvia and had a family. He paid bitterly for his fault, for his weakness." He sank into brooding, and getting up quietly Lord Byron left him to his thoughts.

There were two excitements at lunch. First, Papa marched in proudly, stood at the head of the table, waved an oratorical arm, and declaimed:

"Ladies and gentlemen, boys, girls, and even Baby, the greatest novel of this or any other age is finished, completed, ended. It is even more amazingly perfect than I myself had dared to hope. It is, in fact, the one great and original ten thousand dollar novel. Hip, hip, hurray!" and he sank majestically into his chair.

Pandemonium broke loose, cheers, questions, comments, simple shouts and rounds of applause. Papa informed them that he was going to town that afternoon to see that the manuscript was safely shipped, and that they could all set to work

## THE MYSTERY CLEARED UP

to plan how they would spend the prize when it should be given him.

The racket was still at its height when two of the constabulary came to demand speech with Mr. Brandon-Smith. They were asked in, and revealed the fact that the old woman and three of her voodoo doctors had been caught at last. Mr. Brandon-Smith's testimony would be needed. When could he come to the court?

"I can come to-morrow, officer. Drive down easily enough. I have business that must be attended to anyhow, before I go back to Lost Pen. And I'm going back there at once."

There were protestations, and Mumsie was sure that he wasn't strong enough to think of such a thing yet, but he laughed and said he could have gone back several days ago, if he hadn't enjoyed being here so much. Alice would go with him, and she could look after him if he needed looking after.

He glanced at Lord Byron, after the two men, saluting, had departed with their information.

"Might as well tell them the whole thing," he said. Briefly, he told of his changed fortunes, while the tableful sat gasping with astonishment and delighted interest. Alice alone looked dismayed. When he had done, he turned to her:

## ISLAND FARM

“So we’ll be going Home, my dear, as soon as I can make the necessary arrangements. You’ll be an English girl, after all, not a poor little island castaway,” and he smiled at her.

“It’s wonderful, Papa, but, but,” and her voice broke. She rushed to him, buried her face on his shoulder. “I don’t want to leave them all,” she said, half sobbing, “just when we’ve got to be friends.”

They surged about her, petting, exclaiming:

“Don’t you fret, we’ll be coming to see you,” declared Wendo. “When I’m in Paris studying Art I’ll come to visit you, and anyhow you can easily come to stay with us now and then.”

Alice began smiling and presently every one was happy again, and discussing the change and all it might bring. They laughed every time they called Mr. Brandon-Smith by his real name, Sir Brandon, and insisted that Alice was a Lady, which of course she wasn’t. “A baronet’s daughter hasn’t any title,” the Princess told them. “She’ll have to marry one if she wants it,” and that made them all laugh, to think of Alice getting married.

Zack asked Sir Brandon if he might drive to the town with him the next morning. Then he had a long talk with Enley and Deedah. The

## THE MYSTERY CLEARED UP

three of them decided that it was time to see a sea captain and discover exactly what chance there was of getting taken aboard to work their way to America.

"You see if you can get it fixed up with one of those captains about the money and what time to go, and if there's any chance for me," Deedah said. "Of course, something may happen so you won't need to run away, but if there doesn't, it's just as well to be ready. Here's Alice off for England, and we aren't going to sit still and do nothing, no sirree!"

"Well, I'll ask Mr. Brandon-Smith what he thinks about it, and if he can help us any way at all," Zack stated.

"I suppose Papa and Mumsie'll be mad with us," Enley added, as they stood thinking over their plan, "but they'll get over it. They don't realize," his voice was grave with the importance of the fact, "that we're growing up, and haven't much time left before we'll be men."

"And women," Deedah ended.

When Papa came back that evening he brought a cable.

"There's another friend looming on the horizon," he said, tossing it into the lap of the Princess. "Our Wild Irishman."

## ISLAND FARM

She read the words of the cable aloud:

"Arriving fifteenth hope to find you." It was signed *Howard, the Irishman*.

"It's sent from New York," commented Mumsie, "so he's been on this side. Wonder what dragged him out of Ireland?" She beamed at Papa. "Won't it be splendid seeing him again?"

"I don't know any one I'd rather see," agreed Papa. The children asked, immediately, to be told all there was to tell in regard to this coming visitor. Why hadn't they ever heard of him before, what did he do, why was he wild, did he talk Irish, how long would he stay?

The Princess waved a despairing hand:

"Oh hush! How can I tell you anything if you all keep on talking together?" Then, in the comparative quiet that ensued, she explained. They called him the Wild Irishman because he was the quietest and gentlest-voiced man in the world, and an American who insisted that Ireland was the only place fit to live in and paint in, for he was a painter. Indeed, a very well-known painter. And she couldn't say how long he'd stay, but she hoped for a long time. And they had heard of him before, but had forgotten.

"You often say we've heard of things we haven't," Deedah remarked, "because you forget



## THE MYSTERY CLEARED UP

how often you and Papa talk together when we aren't anywhere round. I know we never heard of him, Mumsie."

"Well, you'll just have to excuse us," replied Mumsie, and looked amused. Wendo broke in then to exclaim with delight over the fact that the Wild Irishman was a painter.

"I'll show him all I've done, and he'll teach me," she cried, greatly excited. "And then . . ."

"Mumsie," put in Deedah, "don't you think that sometime we had better go back to America?" She spoke carelessly, but it was a test question. She wanted to sound her mother, to find whether there was any chance of their turning their faces homeward again. If there were, then this daring plan to run away to sea need not materialize.

The Princess said nothing for a moment, then she sighed.

"I'm afraid we must relinquish all idea of making a living here," she said slowly. "Of course if your father does win that prize we might follow Lord Byron's advice, and buy a banana plantation. But if he doesn't I don't know just what we'll do. It takes a lot of money to move a big family like ours, and then we'll have to get rid of this place, and it isn't easy to find a buyer just

## ISLAND FARM

because you need one. . . . I don't know what we'll do." She smiled rather anxiously at her children. "We'll just have to wait and see what turns up, my dear," she finished.

Deedah made no answer. But now she felt decided. If she and the boys could get back by working their way, surely that would be a help. Then maybe there'd be enough money to get the rest home too. And they themselves could send back money, once they found jobs. To her inexperience there did not appear to be any difficulties in the way of their doing what they planned.

The next morning Zack and Sir Brandon Alaston drove away very early. Enley stood on the steps, seeing them off:

"Don't forget," he said to Zack, as the horses started.

"You bet your life I won't," Zack retorted, and drove off in the fresh sunlight of the new morning, for Charles's prophecy of fair weather was fulfilled, whether or not he was right in saying the rains were entirely over.

On the way down Zack pondered whether he should take Sir Brandon into his confidence. In the end he decided that he'd see the captain he knew first. No harm in that.

## THE MYSTERY CLEARED UP

Once in the town the Englishman left the horses at the inn, and hurried away to the courthouse. Zack had already explained that he had business of his own to attend to.

The boy made off down the high street for the docks, his heart thumping a little with the importance of his mission. But he did not need to go as far, for who should he encounter but the very man he wanted, coming out of the bank.

"Oh, hallo, Captain," Zack hailed him. "Please, can I talk to you?"

"Drive ahead, but be quick about it, young man." The captain was a stout, red-faced gentleman with a glass eye, and spoke in a quick staccato manner that was somewhat flustering. But Zack did not waver in his purpose.

"My brother and I want to work our way back to America as likely boys aboard your ship, Captain. Can we?"

The captain looked slightly taken aback. He stopped walking and stared at the boy.

"Eh, what's that?"

Zack, hurriedly, repeated his question.

The captain burst into a roar of laughter.

"Likely boys, eh? Likely not!" He stopped laughing. "Tell you what, me lad. You bring me a letter from a responsible party recommend-

## ISLAND FARM

ing you as likely to suit, and I'll take you. But he'll have to be some one I know, see." He winked at Zack.

"All right, sir." Zack, slightly red in the face, held his ground. "I'll bring you a letter. And then you'll let us work our way back? And how much money will you give us?"

"I'll give you a pound each and your keep and plenty of work," and laughing again, the captain saluted and rolled off up the street.

Zack decided to say nothing to Sir Brandon till he had talked over the result of his encounter with the captain with his brother and the girls. They had their friend's promise to do anything he could for them in return for having saved his life. Surely he would not refuse the required letter, and after that it would be smooth sailing. He grinned as the phrase came into his mind. Maybe it wouldn't be so smooth. Not much fun having to work when you were seasick!

He met Sir Brandon at the inn, as agreed, and had luncheon with him in a grown-up way. The preliminary hearing was over, and they could start back to Eureka Pen right after the meal.

"They've caught three men with her," Alaston said. "Horrid affair, and I'll be dashed glad when my part in it's over. The actual trial won't

## THE MYSTERY CLEARED UP

start for a week, however, and I'll be getting back home to-morrow."

Zack reported to his eager brethren the events of the day as soon as they were alone together. Deedah sighed with excitement.

"It certainly looks as if things were going to come out O. K. When will you tell Mr. Brandon—Sir Brandon, I mean—about it and get that letter you need?"

"Well, you know the ship sails to-night, and then again in about three weeks, and by that time we ought to have everything fixed. Sir Brandon said he'd probably stay with us again next week, when the trial begins, and then . . ."

"But you didn't ask him about whether I could go sometime—as a stewardess or something like that—did you?"

"Gosh, I forgot all about you!" Zack looked aghast.

"I'll see him myself. That's the best way."

Next morning Alice and her father left for Lost Pen, amid tears. For Alice had come to be one of the family, and the girls wept at taking leave of her. To be sure, she was coming back within a week when her father returned. He would stay in the town while the trial was in progress, and

## ISLAND FARM

leave Alice at Eureka. But soon both would be leaving for far away England. This first going-away was a hint of that one, a forerunner, and doubly sad for that reason.

“Any how, that new man will be here when you come back, Allie,” said Treachy. “So there is some excitement ahead. Oh, I wish good-bys had never been invented! And now I’ll never make that visit to you we planned.”

For Mumsie had vetoed a suggestion that Treachy should go along this time. She thought Sir Brandon had enough on his hands without having a guest with him. There was a tremendous deal to do before he could get his affairs ready to return to England. And he was still very far from well.

“We’ll have Alice back here in no time,” she said, “and that’ll have to do.”

## CHAPTER XVII

### EXCITING EVENTS

PAPA went down the night before the ship with the Wild Irishman was due to arrive, so that he could meet his friend and drive him up to the Pen. The weather was wonderful again, and everything bloomed and flourished after the long soaking rains, everything that is except the garden. The vegetables had most of them rotted under the downpour. The hope of making a success of the venture was definitely over. With the rains coming just at the season when it was necessary to get the produce to New York, there was no use in going ahead. The farms at home would begin producing presently, for winter was passing.

"I feel that my book is going to win," Papa said to the Princess, "and as soon as we know that it has we'll know what to plan. And if it doesn't—well, we'll find a way out." They smiled at each other. After all, there was always a way out.



## ISLAND FARM

Of course every one was on the veranda to welcome Papa and the new visitor, including Lord Byron, who had planned to leave before this, but had been persuaded to stay on a while longer. Just before tea time the rattle of the wheels was heard, and a shout rose: "Here they come!" Round the clump of bananas the horses swung, and next moment drew up before the steps.

The children liked him at once. He wasn't very tall, but he was athletic in build, with a serious yet smiling look, the bluest of eyes, and a voice that was good to listen to, with just a touch of richness in his accent, caught from his many years in Ireland. He jumped out and ran up the steps, and laughed, and kissed the Princess' hand and told her she looked lovelier and younger than ever, and swept his eyes over the children and said, "All yours?" and when Mumsie answered yes, "Perfectly amazing," he retorted. And shook each one by the hand even the Baby.

And in just about two minutes they all felt they'd known him forever, and couldn't imagine how they had possibly got along without him. He was that kind of person.

Life went on much as usual at Eureka, now that the Wild Irishman was assimilated, but under the

## EXCITING EVENTS

surface there was a stir and a thrill. For the boys, secretly, with their sisters' help, were getting ready for sea. Deedah made them each a duffelbag, out of pieces of striped awning left over from the curtains to one of the sleeping porches. Treachy darned all their socks and Wendo, not to be outdone, sewed buttons on everything that buttoned. The boys routed out two old sweaters, secured soap, towels, a box of crackers, jars of jam, and sharpened their case knives, a Christmas gift. Once or twice Mumsie found one or another of them at these peculiar occupations, and asked what on earth they were up to, but didn't follow the matter further. She had a good deal to think about without worrying over the fact that her brood seemed suddenly to have become industrious.

Wendo had an added interest. She became the inseparable companion of the Wild Irishman when he went out to paint, which was part of every day. She came back from these hours of work with shining eyes, and she chattered happily of future plans.

"He says I've got to learn a whole lot but that I'm a real artist, and he's going to take me to New York to study!"

And this was true. He was enthusiastic about

## ISLAND FARM

the girl's talent. He told Papa and the Princess that she "had the real thing." He stood up her sketches in a row along the veranda, and talked about them.

"There you are. She's got it, the essential thing. What no one can teach her. And she's got to have the rest. I've no one of my own, and I'm going to ask you to let me see that she works under the right men."

He turned and fixed his bright blue eyes on the Princess, who looked at him amazed.

"There must be some one you know in New York where she can live. I'll make it my business to get her there, to put her in art school, and after a bit I'll see that she goes to Paris . . . but that's in the future, of course. Don't try to say no, Princess. The child's got the God-given thing, and neither you nor any one else has the right to stand in the way of its development."

That was what the artist was like. He never bothered about things that worry people usually. Wendo said that he was perfectly calm afterwards when he and she and Papa and Mumsie talked it over in the study. They said they couldn't possibly let him burden himself with any such responsibility, and he—

## EXCITING EVENTS

“He just said they talked like phillystons, whatever they are,” reported Wendo. “Anyhow, they kind of smiled, and then he told them that art was more important than a lot of silly notions of responsibility. Gosh, it was exciting! ‘I happen to have more money than I need, and no children,’ he said, and his eyes snapped like blue fire, ‘and you’ve got this raft of children and not enough money.’ And ever so much more. And at last they all smiled together and looked at me, and Papa said, ‘All right then, we can scratch this nuisance off our list of liabilities,’ and grinned at me . . . and that’s all so far.”

“Ye gods, Wendo,” exclaimed Deedah dramatically, “ye gods, you’re going to beat us all! Art school, then France. Wow!”

Zack, in his excitement, threw a green orange at the rear of Charles who was bending over, washing the wagonette. The man leaped, turned, and came forward indignantly, sputtering “What for you fling him at me. I go tell Massa, esplain I no work here at all, fling him at me. . . .”

“Ah, Charley, I didn’t think I’d hit you, really! Come along, now, don’t get mad, and I’ll help you wash that trap.” Faintly muttering, the black man accepted the offer, and soon the two were

## ISLAND FARM

giggling together, Zack talking of the wonders of America and promising Charles that he should surely get there.

Presently it was all settled that when the artist went to New York Wendo would go too, and meanwhile arrangements were to be made with a schoolgirl friend of Mumsie's to have the child stay with her. It was terribly thrilling. Part of the time Wendo was scared, part she was so happy she almost couldn't stay on the ground.

"Myrtle has often begged me to let one of the girls make her a long visit," said the Princess, "and I know she'll welcome Wendo. But it's awfully far away . . ." she stopped abruptly, but when the artist said, "Now, Princess, now," she smiled quickly, and went on, saying that they must get Wendo ready, so she could leave as soon as they heard definitely.

"Maybe we'll *all* be back soon," she added, cheerily.

The week was over much sooner than any one had thought possible, and back came Alice and Sir Brandon. Alice was humming with the news that they were sailing for England in two weeks, and was overcome with delight at hearing of the wonderful development in Wendo's affairs. She told the boys that her father had not forgotten

## EXCITING EVENTS

that he had promised to do something for them and that he wanted to see them about it at once.

“We want to see him all alone,” said Enley. “We’ve got something we want him to do. Do you think he’d come to the packing shed?”

Alice thought he certainly would, and went off to tell him. The boys waited anxiously, and before long saw their friend striding and swinging with his crutch in their direction. They met him, ushered him to a bench, and sat down on a couple of boxes opposite.

“Out with it, my lads, and I hope it’s something stiff,” said Sir Brandon, looking at them gravely.

“You see,” began Enley, and paused, looking at Zack. “You go ahead,” grunted Zack.

“Well, we know a captain on a ship who’s goin’ to take us to the U. S. A as likely boys to work our way, and pay us five dollars each. Only he’s got to have a letter from a ‘responsible party’ he said. And we want you to write the letter. You see,” and Enley hurried a bit, “probably Papa and Mumsie will be apt to think we’d better not go off that way, they kind of think we can’t do things, but once we do ’em then they don’t mind.”

“Ah,” remarked Sir Brandon Alaston, looking at them thoughtfully.

“You see,” broke in Zack eagerly, “we want to

## ISLAND FARM

get back to the good old U. S. A. You said yourself this wasn't the place to spend your life in if you are a white man. . . ."

"And," interrupted Enley, "we want to get to work at something different from anything we can ever do here. There are too many niggers on this island, so you can't get odd jobs like we used to at Makeshift Farm, and make money. We need to make money, because I'm goin' to be an architect and Zack's probbly goin' to be an officer in the Navy, and he wants to go to Annapolis."

"Hm!" Sir Brandon still looked at them steadily. "But what will you do when you land in New York? Rather a big place to be stranded in."

"Oh, we'll find something to do all right. And then there's our Uncle, the Old Hunter. We think maybe we'll go out West to him. He likes us ever so much, and we can be cowboys or trappers or maybe miners for a while."

"I see. Of course, I shall be glad to give a letter to you for the captain, but I've a notion of my own that may perhaps prove better than this of yours. Tell you what: "I'll just sound your father out, and if he falls in with my idea, I'll put it up to you. Then you can choose which you prefer, what?"



## EXCITING EVENTS

“What is this idea of yours?” asked Zack, doubtfully.

“I don’t want to say anything about it till I’m sure it’ll work. Of course it’ll be entirely up to you, supposing your father approves it. I think it’s rather a topping idea, however. I’ll keep what you’ve told me in the strictest confidence, and you can count on my giving you any assistance you need in case your decision is against this plan of mine. But, you know, I think you’ll cotton to it.”

“Fine!” said Zack, and Enley chimed in with a “you bet!” They separated, shaking hands over the bargain, and Sir Brandon told them that he’d let them know that evening how the talk with their father came out.

The boys reported gleefully to the girls, including Alice.

“Gee whiz,” exclaimed Treachy, “things are certainly happening! But how are Deedah and I going to get back, and do wonderful things? I know what I want to be.”

“What?” came the chorus.

“Well,” said Treachy firmly, “I’m going to have a whole lot of children, and be their mother. Maybe ten or a dozen.”

They hooted.

## ISLAND FARM

"That's all right, but you've got to get married first," Deedah pointed out. "Who will you marry?"

"There are lots of people in America to marry," Treachy returned carelessly, "the thing to do is to get there."

"We've all got futures now," said Wendo. "Deedah's going to write, I'm going to paint, Treachy's going to be a mother, Zack a navy officer and Enley an architect. All except the Baby. But she's too little yet to be anything."

The Baby herself came trudging toward them at this moment, something in her hand at which she was staring thoughtfully.

"What've you got, Baby?" called Wendo.

"Got a butterfly . . . it was suf-fer-ing," said the Baby, sadly. She opened her hand, displaying the rather ragged remains of a dead butterfly.

"Oh, Baby, did you kill it?"

"It was suf-fer-ing," repeated the Baby anxiously. "I saw it and then I killed it."

"It's awful," declared Deedah. "Ever since she found that bird with a broken wing and Mum-sie told her it would have to be killed, because it was suffering, she goes about killing things. How do you know it was suffering?"

## EXCITING EVENTS

“It was—” tears burst from the Baby’s eyes. “It was crawling slowly on the ground, and it was sick . . .” she cried wildly. Deedah hastily gathered her into her arms and soothed her with whispered words.

“That’s all right, darling, of course it was, poor little thing, and now it isn’t in any more pain. Don’t you cry, pet. Listen, we’re going down the road to get pawpaws, and you can come too. But I tell you what, next time you find some poor little suffering thing you let us see it before you kill it, won’t you? Maybe it will only be a little sick, and we can cure it.”

The Baby nodded, gulping back her tears. And the group went off down to the pawpaw patch, talking merrily, all of their hearts full of the joy of life and the thrill of the future.

Meanwhile Sir Brandon Alaston and Papa and the Princess were having a confab, sometimes very serious, and sometimes laughing. The end of it was that the three rose and stood a moment looking out of the widely opened door to where, in the distance, the bright dresses of the little girls could be seen, clustered together, while the boys, in their khaki overalls, clambered in the boughs of a stubby tree.

“Yes,” remarked Papa, as though ending a

## ISLAND FARM

sentence, "they'll have to begin their separate existences. They're growing up, ridiculous as it seems—and life is reaching for them."

Charles had gone to town that morning instead of the girls to do the errands and get the mail, for Deedah and Wendo didn't want to miss any of Alice's visit. He came back early in the afternoon with a big bundle of letters and papers, but, more important still, with news concerning the obeah woman and the trial.

That very morning, the turnkey, going into the cell where the prisoner was confined, had found her dead.

"Warn't no mark on her, warn't no reason *attall* why she die," Charles, awe-stricken, informed them. "There she lie, stiff dead, yassah, and no one know what kill her. Duppie, for certain! And judge, him say no need for Massa Brannon-Simmitt to come testify, and give me thisyer paper for you, Sah," and Charles, with a flourish, presented a legal-looking document to the baronet.

The paper contained the information that the three blacks caught with the old woman had confessed their part in the plot to kill Alaston, and that under the circumstances his further testi-

## EXCITING EVENTS

mony would not be required. The proceedings were practically closed with the sending to prison of these deluded men.

“I’m glad that’s over,” Sir Brandon said thankfully. “With her gone, this voodoo practice will dwindle, for she was the moving spirit of the whole horrible business, a really terrible old person. She never did anything better than to die quietly like this.”

Every one, indeed, felt that the air was clearer and the island sweeter now that the strange, and as Papà said, probably insane old creature, had passed out of it.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE WORLD OPENS ITS DOORS

**A**S usual every one gathered on the veranda after dinner. The moon was full, flooding the hills with silver, bringing out sharp shadows where little cañons lay, gleaming on the far-off sea. Huge fireflies flickered among leaves and grasses, and now nearer, now far, a white owl called mournfully. The odors of the tropic night were sweet and strong, the air a caress.

“What an exquisite world it is,” murmured the Princess. “Surely if one could live on beauty alone, then here is the place to stay forever.”

Every one sat silent, under the spell of the night, thinking about the words that the Princess had spoken. Deedah felt that in them was a poem, if she could but lay hold of it. “Beauty is Truth, Truth Beauty,” she murmured, under her breath, and a pang shot through her at the thought that they would leave and see such loveliness no more. “But,” she consoled herself, “there are other lovely places, and besides, one has to see every-

## THE WORLD OPENS ITS DOORS

thing.” For the whole world did not seem too big for her. The boys, who sat close together, thought of the stir and excitement that lay ahead of them, and wondered with beating hearts when Sir Brandon would speak concerning his plan for them. Wendo was sitting beside the artist, and at the Princess’s words he laid a hand on her shoulder. Wendo lifted her head and smiled in response. Only that afternoon he had talked to her of the joy that creating a beautiful thing gave to the creator of it, and she remembered that he had said no work was too hard and no hardship too burdensome if it led to that result. She knew she would often be terribly homesick while she was studying, far from all these persons who were so near and dear. Her eyes flooded, but there was singing in her heart.

Papa broke the silence by remarking:

“Boys, Sir Brandon has brought me an extraordinarily generous proposition in regard to you two. I’ve accepted it, under certain conditions, but he wants to know exactly what you think of it.” Turning to the baronet he said, “Maybe you’ll tell them yourself, Alaston.”

“It’s just this, boys. My notion is to put the two of you in one of the New England schools, where you can get ready for college . . . or



for Annapolis, if you prefer. I owe you a tidy bit of thanks for pulling me out of that hole . . . especially with this surprise in England waiting for me! And I know you'll put your backs into your work, and all that sort of thing. Your whole family has done more for me and Alice than I can put into words. . . . I'm hoping you'll let me do this little thing in return."

The boys gave a simultaneous gasp.

"To a big boys' school in America?" exclaimed Enley, getting back his breath. "Just because we found you before you were dead."

"That still seems important to me," answered Sir Brandon, with a dry chuckle.

"Good gosh," from Zack, "of course we'd like that better'n anything in the whole world—but it seems an awful lot for you to do!"

"There's where my conditions come in," put in Papa. "There are scholarships to be won at this school, and there are other ways of making some of your expenses. And I want you to try to win and do all you can to help get through."

"Sure," said Zack. "You bet we'll do our durndest, Sir Brandon. Luckily we can get back to America by ourselves, so that much is to the good!"

## THE WORLD OPENS ITS DOORS

“What are you talking about?” It was the Princess who asked.

Enley explained in a few words.

“So you see we’ll get to New York anyhow and have five dollars each when we land, and that’s something.”

It was the turn of Mumsie and Papa to gasp now, and they did so. Then they laughed.

“Fine,” declared Papa. “You have been laying plans of your own, have you? What do you say, Princess? Might be a darned good idea.”

But the Princess wasn’t one bit enthusiastic.

“You’ve earned enough with all your work here, my dears,” she said, “to pay your passage back and give you a little ready money, and I have that put aside for you. I want you to go on the same ship with Wendo and the artist . . . and you two are going at the same time, aren’t you?” she turned to Sir Brandon.

He nodded, and Alice gave a little shriek of delight, flinging her arms round Wendo.

Well, that sounded pretty good to the boys, though deep in their hearts they did want to ship as likely boys and have a real taste of life on the ocean wave as professional seamen. However, some concessions must be made in return for the

wonderful future opening to them. They rose, and going to Sir Brandon, shook hands gravely.

"Then that's settled," he remarked, in a satisfied voice.

Deedah and Treachy exchanged looks of mixed emotions. It was fine indeed for the portion of the family that were to go home again so soon; but how about them, left here, seething with ambitions of their own?

And now Lord Byron was heard from. The Baby, as usual, was camped in his lap, utterly content, and caressing one of the kittens that purred comfortably in response.

"I had a letter among the rest Charles brought this afternoon that may interest you, old man," he handed a folded paper to Papa. "Been waiting for the psychological moment since I got it. Course, it mayn't appeal to you, but there it is."

Papa opened the letter and read it by the moonlight falling in a bright white patch across his shoulder.

It was from a magazine for which Lord Byron had been writing a series of articles on his Yucatan excavations and discoveries. It offered Papa an editorial position and also wanted a group of articles from him.

Papa finished reading and again there was a

space of complete silence, while every one took the news in and realized what it meant. Then Papa struck the letter with one hand:

“By the Lord Harry, Byron, I don’t know of anything that could please me better than this! How did it come?”

“I knew they were looking for some one, and it seemed to me they’d be lucky if they could get you. I wrote them, and they sent that back by the next mail.”

“Then, why, then we’ll all go back,” cried Mumsie. “It seems too good to be true!”

“But I thought you wanted to live here always,” exclaimed Deedah, “and were going to buy a banana plantation when Papa wins the prize! So Treachy and I were wondering how we would get back to the U. S. A. like the boys, because I’m going to be a writer on a newspaper, in New York, and Treachy means to be the mother of a lot of children, and so she’s got to get back too, because there’s no one to marry here.”

“And now we’re going without any trouble at all,” chanted Treachy, to the chucklings of the grown-ups. Then Lord Byron asked her if she wouldn’t consider marrying him, which embarrassed her very much.

"I guess perhaps not, thanks," she said, and they laughed more than ever.

When they got sobered down Papa spoke up:

"I think perhaps we'd better stick round with you youngsters a bit longer, just to watch you growing up. You seem to have started doing that in earnest, though Mumsie and I hadn't noticed it till very recently. Of course, once the prize is won, she and I may go on a toot round the world, and leave you to your several fates. But there was another letter to-day with one more item of news, and it concerns you, Deedah!"

"Me? Jiminy, what is it?"

"Your Fairy Godmother has written that she's going to Europe for a year and that she wants to take you with her. Of course, if you don't want to go. . . ." Papa got no further, for a yell burst from Deedah's open mouth, and she fairly hurled herself through the air to clutch her father round the neck.

"Pops, *is it true, is it?*" she demanded wildly.

It was. And it proved the greatest sensation of that remarkable evening. A babel of talk broke out. Deedah was instantly told that she must make a long visit at Winchelsea with Alice and her father. She was informed that she was to see England, France, and Italy. And she was

further instructed that only a month lay between the present moment and her start

“And with blessed, darling Fairy Godmother!” gasped Deedah. For so the children called their one beloved and wonderful aunt. “What a marvelous time we’ll have. But oh, jinks! I do wish all of you were coming too.”

But the boys said that they wouldn’t go if they could, much preferring their own destination, and Wendo proclaimed airily that she was going later anyhow, after she’d learnt all she could at art school. And Mumsie, giving her a little hug, said she’d miss her dreadfully, but would be so busy settling in a new home and everything that the year would pass quickly and bring Deedah, with all her adventures, back to them. And the Baby, infected by the general excitement, said she’d give her sister the parrot to take with her. And Treachy said she would keep house for Mumsie, and . . .

“And go to school, too, darling,” said Mumsie. And that brought the end of the wonderful evening, for it was discovered that it was long after ten and that every one ought to have been in bed before this, and some long before.

But the four girls got together in Deedah’s room and giggled and gabbled for another half

hour. "Rome!" Deedah would mumble, and Alice would interject, "Maybe Papa'll let me come to France when you're there," and Deedah would say "Paris," and Treachy would give a little crow of excitement, even though she wasn't going either to Rome or Paris, and Wendo would put in a stirring word or two about New York and being a painter, and then they'd all four squeak and giggle again. It was really impossible to say how long they'd have kept it up but at last Mum-sie came in and sent them straight off to bed and said if they weren't asleep in two minutes not one of them should ever stir off the island. So, laughing, they skipped away, and probably fell asleep inside the time allowed, for anyhow they woke to the knowledge that they were surely going off on the long trails opening to them. For Mum-sie sent Zack down to see about steamer reservations and put an advertisement in the paper saying Eureka Pen was for sale. And a cable went to Fairy Godmother telling her Deedah would be ready. And another to the magazine editor saying Papa was accepting. And a letter to the school that had been selected to arrange for the boys. What a morning!

The days flew by like lightning, bringing the



## THE WORLD OPENS ITS DOORS

sailing date for Alice and Wendo, the boys and the three men, since Lord Byron was leaving too, almost before you could say *knife*, as Sir Brandon remarked. A bid had come for Eureka Pen, and though it wasn't as much as had been paid for it, still it was a stroke of luck selling the place at all. In another week the rest of the family were to follow, but it was thought best the boys and Wendo should go as planned, the spring term of their schools opening a few days after they were to land, and it was better to arrive in time for that.

So, since they were all to see each other so soon again, it was a jolly good-by party that gathered on the pier and chattered till the last moment, and then waved till the figures on the ship grew too small and distant to distinguish.

It was a very small party that gathered round the dining table that night. Papa and the Princess, Deedah, Treachy and the Baby.

"It doesn't seem possible that we've been on this island more than a year," the Princess remarked, as they ate the very good dinner the cook had prepared. "And yet it seems much more than a year since we first arrived, and knew noth-

## ISLAND FARM

ing at all about it!" and she laughed. "Well, we'll all be back in America soon, and what then?"

"What then?" said Papa. "Why, then, of course, fame and fortune will dog our every footstep. Deedah's poems will be on every lip, Wendo's pictures in all the millionaires' galleries, Treachy will be marrying the best of our visiting princes, Zack commanding the fleets of the nation, and Enley building palaces, churches, and department stores. As for me, I shall be getting out a magazine that will be the envy and despair of every other editor in the country, and you—"

"Yes, how about me?" asked the Princess, smiling.

"You will continue to be the most wonderful woman in the world, ready to go anywhere or do anything with and for each and all of us," declared Papa, and he gave her a big hug.

"And when will we know about the prize?" inquired Deedah.

"That trifling matter," returned her father, "will probably be settled about the time we get to New York. However, to a family in our situation, what is a mere ten thousand dollars more or less?"

"I'll bet you've won it," said Deedah, with conviction.

## THE WORLD OPENS ITS DOORS

"Of course you have," declared Treachy.

"Me too," cried the Baby, "I bet, I bet, I bet!"

And the parrot, walking energetically back and forth on her perch, lifted up her voice and croaked "Me too, me too," chuckling as she did so.

"I don't see why you shouldn't have won it," from the Princess.

"That seems to make it unanimous," said Papa. "I guess I have."

"I'm sure you have," agreed the Princess, and they all laughed, not caring very much one way or the other, since life was a good adventure anyhow, and they were in the middle of it.

(1)

THE END



## STORIES GIRLS WILL ENJOY

### **BARRY THE UNDAUNTED**

By EARL REED SILVERS. A year at a genuine high school with the activities in which boys and girls take part.

### **BARRY AND BUDD**

By EARL REED SILVERS. A tale of summer adventure and athletics, with the same characters as in "Barry the Undaunted."

### **THE SECRET OF HALLOWDENE FARM**

By DORIS POCOCK. Chris Gilmour goes to live with her two cousins on a farm, and learns a great deal about resourcefulness and the way to meet difficulties. There is a touch of mystery for added interest.

### **SUMMER AT HALLOWDENE FARM**

By DORIS POCOCK. Further adventures of the jolly young people of Hallowdene Farm, centering about Chris Gilmour and her chum, Gypsy.

### **MARY CINDERELLA BROWN**

By DOROTHY WHITEHILL. A little girl who rather believes in fairies meets a young man at a dramatic moment of his life, and together they work out a real story almost as good as a fairy tale.

### **THE MYSTERIOUS TUTOR**

By GLADYS BLAKE. The boys and girls of a Southern family, with their tutor, become involved in strange events connected with a long lost collection of Russian jewels.

### **THE OLD KING'S TREASURE**

By GLADYS BLAKE. An Italian Count with his two children returns from America to his ancestral estate where the children discover an invaluable treasure.

### **MAKESHIFT FARM**

By HILDEGARDE HAWTHORNE. A large family retires to an old farm because of financial reverses; this is a delightful story of their jolly life there.

*Each \$1.75*

**D. APPLETON AND COMPANY**

**NEW YORK**

**LONDON**







# Date Due

OCT 11 1938

JUL 20 1940

SEP 26 1940

JUN 9 1943

JUL 7 1943

OCT 8 1943

FEB 17 1944

JUN 10 1947

JUL 25 1947

DISCARDED

SALT LAKE  
PUBLIC LIBRARY  
CHAPMAN BRANCH

**Free Public Library**

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

X H 39822

This book may be kept two weeks; fine if detained longer two cents a day. Subject to

no renewal.

No book lent to anyone having fines or penalties unsettled.

Borrowers will be held responsible for imperfections of book, unless the same are reported when the book is taken.

**Extract From City Library Rules**

Any person who shall mark, tear, or in any manner whatever, injure, deface, mutilate or destroy any book, pamphlet, or other property of the Free Public Library of Salt Lake City, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, and shall be punishable by fine not to exceed fifty dollars.

**KEEP YOUR CARD IN THIS POCKET**

